

Pierce Pages



A newsletter from IFPTE Local 17, AFL-CIO - September 9, 2009

*A Message from Local 17 Union
Representative Rene Jankiewicz*

Asbestos Complaint Update

The Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals (BIIA), Judge Duras, is scheduled to hear and rule on the matters related to potential asbestos exposure at the Tacoma Mall Office Building and resulting fines the County has been ordered to pay by the State Dept. of Labor and Industries.

Hearings are scheduled over several days in October and November in both the Tacoma and Olympia Offices of the BIIA.

The County is disputing the fines which amount to just over \$2,700. IFPTE Local 17 filed the complaint.

Both Local 17 and the Attorney General's office will be representing the safety interests of Pierce County members in this hearing process. ■

Public Works Budget News

In discussions with Toby Rickman, he expressed an interest in surveying members to determine how people would feel about going to a 39-hour workweek for one year or a one week unpaid furlough if it would save jobs—if the budget gets bad enough.

He indicated that his interest would be in trying to achieve this Public Works- wide. We will email a survey to determine if people have a preference regarding furloughs vs. layoffs, if the budget reaches a point that would require action.

The survey will come from County email but must be printed and turned in to a designated steward or at meetings that will be held in October. Expect to see the survey and meeting info. in your County email in October. When we have specific dates we will post them on the Pierce County website. ■

Health Care Update

Apparently, with the crisis, the County has not reserved or budgeted any funds for potential health care increases.

Right now, we are looking at projected plan increases in the range of roughly 13 percent unless we are successful in getting Regence down.

We are negotiating with the County on potential plan design changes and other options to mitigate the potential cost increase that could be passed on to members, barring other solutions.

As soon as additional information is available about accurate rate information, we will pass it along. We will also use the October meetings to discuss this issue along with the furlough Q&A.

Labor is working to communicate and work together on health care. One suggestion--stick together. Right now, encouraging the County to fund health care is appropriate.

If you have feelings about giving up any of our negotiated achievements, don't spread these at the workplace. They will only be used against us. We need to fight to keep our plan solid. While the County may not be in a position to fund at the levels they used to, planning intentionally for \$0 increases for health care funding is not realistic or responsible to employees. This is the message we need to send! Your input is greatly appreciated. Ideas are welcome. Please email me at rene@ifpte17.org. ■



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Contact Rene Jankiewicz
206-328-7321 ext.132, rene@ifpte17.org

