

## Contract ratified by Local 2822 members

By Lynn Stetler, president

Local 2822 members approved the contract agreement on Thursday, Dec. 3 by 85.7 %; overall AFSCME bargaining units approved by 84.7%

As a veteran member of 2822's Table Team, this year's negotiations were by far the most difficult. Early on in the process, I had rationalized that having fewer sessions and starting them later in the fall would result in a less painful process. Wrong! Little progress was made until the final day—frankly, the Table Team nearly walked out in frustration with lack of any measurable movement by the employer in the previous session. Every step we made to reach a settlement was hard fought. The team spent

hours talking through potential changes with every counter proposal made and received. There was small comfort in knowing that having reached an agreement after 16 hours meant not having to endure another "all-nighter." Ultimately, there was little joy at the end of the process. We were successful in: fighting back large increases in health insurance, keeping step increases in 2010, and protecting stability pay in both years. But seeing no cost of living (COLA) increases during the life of the contract will be painful for all.

The negotiating team had a lot of help away from the bargaining table. Thanks to the Action Team, to each of you who phoned, wrote a letter or e-mailed your commissioners, attended a

budget hearing, participated in phone banking, wore a button or sticker or green to the office, talked to your supervisor or manager, or posted a sign of support in your work area. All of these actions were very important in helping fight back the employer's take- a-ways.

Our work is not done. There are predictions of further unallotment by the governor to Local Government Aid (LGA) in 2010, and talk of layoffs continues. We need to continue to work to protect our jobs.

If you're interested in receiving a detailed summary of the agreement, contact me at: [lstetler@hclib.org](mailto:lstetler@hclib.org). This will serve as an essential addendum to the current contract until the new contract is available.

## Day on the Hill—February 17, 2010

As President Stetler stated above, "Our work is not done. There are predictions of further unallotment by the Governor to Local Government Aid (LGA) in 2010, and talk of layoffs continues. We need to continue to work to protect our jobs." And what is the first step we can take this year? Attend the Council 5 AFSCME Day on the Hill. This is our opportunity to go in force to

the Capitol and talk to our own legislators about what is important to us and to the public we serve.

Council 5 President Mike Buesing states in his letter to us: "Over a thousand AFSCME jobs will be lost at the state and at local governments unless the budget crisis is addressed this session. That is why it is imperative that we be as big a presence

this year as we were last year—1100 members attended. Minnesota is at a crossroads between continuing to slide backwards in our public services, or reinvesting in our state and its people. Our elected officials need to hear from us loud and clear that AFSCME Council 5 stands FOR A BETTER MINNESOTA!!!"

The events for Day on the

January						
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 31	25	26	27	28	29	30

### January Membership Meeting

Wednesday, January 6  
7:00 p.m.  
Ridgedale Library

### February Membership Meeting

Wednesday, February 3  
7:00 p.m.  
Brookdale Library

For our members who are physically challenged, please let us know if special accommodations are needed.



Visit Local 2822 website:  
<http://www.afscme2822.org>

Hill begin at the Crown Plaza St. Paul Riverfront with registration from 7:30-10:00AM, workshops from 9:00-9:45, and the General Session at 10:00. A box lunch is provided, and then buses take us to the Capitol for a rousing rally at 12:30. Then we gather by legislative districts to meet with our own legislators at pre-scheduled times. At 5:00 an

(Day continued on page 2)

# A year of change

By Lynn Stetler

December is a time for reflection. 2009 has been a year of great change for many of us—shifted jobs, loss of co-workers, job demotions, etc. Personally, this year has brought the most change in my 34 year career at Hennepin County. While having always worked at the Library and performed many different jobs in that time, I learned early in the year that my current job was being eliminated due to budget constraints. Previously working behind the scenes in technical services, I was now being asked to work in public service at the Information Desk at the library. Since that time, I have worked in three different buildings and learned totally new job responsibilities. Currently, I work at the Hopkins Library. As I have strug-

gled to learn my new job, I am so impressed with my co-workers' commitment to great service to the public and willingness to help me and each other each and every day.

My role as president of the local has changed as well: the leaders of the AF-SCME locals have taken an increased role in influencing the work of the county on behalf of our members. I'm also hearing from more and more members about job changes and demanding managers. We all know the increasing demands being placed on us in every department in the county. There are fewer workers and more work to do. The public we serve is more challenging, needier and often unhappy. It is a reflection of the world we live in. Many workers in HSPHD (Human Services

Public Health Department) are being asked to participate in ROWE (Work Orientated Work Environment). Library workers continue to be impacted on post-merger issues and strategic planning. The rocky start-up with the new payroll system, APEX, is keeping my e-mail inbox full.

In these tough economic times, we are told that we should be thankful to have jobs. And we are. But the harsh reality is that the increased demand for services in the county, combined with a much leaner work force, makes it more difficult to do our jobs effectively and efficiently. Hennepin County works because we do, and we do good work.

I wish you peace and joy in 2010.

*(Day continued from page 1)*

optional reception takes place where many legislators meet with us informally back at the Crown Plaza.

Many members of Local 2822 have attended this very important event in the past and found it very rewarding. If we do our work now, maybe there will be little more for us to negotiate over the next time around. Our registration has to be in by January 11, so please let an e-board member know if you are willing to attend by the Membership Meeting on January 6. You will be reimbursed for parking. Complete information about Day on the Hill is on the Council 5 website at [www.AFSCMEMN.org](http://www.AFSCMEMN.org).

## Dues update

As is customary, and per the Local 2822 Constitution, the dues for full dues paying members will increase by sixty cents in January of 2010. This dues increase is assessed by the International union based on contracts throughout the country in the previous year. Fee paying employees will be assessed a different amount and a letter will be sent to them explaining the formula. Local 2822 is not seeking any further dues increase beyond the sixty cents.

The Local 2822 executive board has worked diligently this past year to tighten our belts on spending. Executive Board meetings were moved every

other month to an evening schedule to avoid paying lost time. Members attending the Council 5 convention were not paid lost time, which was usually done in the past.

Approximately 57% of our dues is paid to Council 5, about 29% is paid to the International Union, about 3 % is paid to Minneapolis and St. Paul Regional Labor Federations, and about 11% stays with our local. The dues money is used to help secure our contracts, for services to our local, for training, for educational purposes, for meetings and for representing our members in grievance situations to mention a few expenses.

In January of 2010 President Stetler and Treasurer Walter Hanson will be attending a workshop on creating a progressive dues structure. That means dues will be based on a, yet to be determined, formula based on wages. Now we have a flat fee dues structure where the highest paid members and the lowest paid members are paying the same dues. Much more information will follow. This will require and amendment to our constitution.

## Delta Dental changes

In 2010 there will be three improvements to the dental plan that is administered by AFSCME Council 5:

- Increase annual maximum from \$1500.00 to \$1750.00
- Allow for coverage of implants at 50%
- Remove exclusion of the replacement of an existing partial denture with a bridge allowing for coverage at 50%.

The Delta Plan Summary can be found on the Local 2822 website, [AFSCME2822.org](http://AFSCME2822.org)

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## Convention report

By Dirk Schot, membership secretary

Hello folks!

I recently attended the Council 5 Convention up in Duluth and I wanted to report back.

The first day we had workshops to attend. The first I attended was the “Resources for Displaced Workers” workshop. This workshop listed quite a few resources that were available for displaced workers or those who are having economic difficulties due to lay-off or reduced paychecks. It was well instructed with many resources as well as some discussion involving some of the work that some of us provide in our daily jobs with resources for customers.

The second workshop I attended involved social networking sites and how

some union locals are using them to keep in contact with members. This was very interesting as it talked about using My Space, Facebook, and Twitter as ways to communicate with and have conversations between members. What I took away from this workshop is that this is something our local could become involved with as we have a large, spread out local. It would be a good tool for informing and energizing the membership.

The next day of the convention mostly dealt with the politics of the next election cycle. It was exciting to see the first televised gubernatorial debate hosted by AFSCME Council 5. The turnout was great—over 700 members present. There was a section that allowed questions submitted by union members to be asked of the candidates, and I believe hearing the answers as

well as the way in which candidates responded to them was useful for members trying to decide who would make a good governor.

Besides all the work of the convention, it was also good to relax and talk to other members around the state. There is much to be said of face to face talking with other activists as it lets members from diverse locals talk about their own battles, funny stories and what motivated them to become involved in the union. When I hear other workers talk about their struggles and triumphs, it really motivates me and makes me feel part of a larger group that is trying to make a difference in this world. We all are the ones who do the work, and we should feel dignified and respected for the labor that we provide.

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## Some other contract changes

By Molly Malecki, Vice-president

There are some contract changes that are getting less press than the money ones.

- PTO (Paid time off): “Employees hired prior to the execution date of this agreement may, at any time after the execution date of this agreement, choose to move from the traditional Vacation/Sick Leave program as described in Articles 11 and 12 of this agreement, to PTO. This one-time choice shall be **IRREVO-CABLE**.” The union has always resisted this change because it decreased the benefits to the employees. However, this time it has been made optional, but it represents a decrease of two days every year. PTO may accrue to a total of 480 hours, which is also the maximum severance pay. Employees choosing to opt for PTO will have their vacation pay changed to PTO and their sick leave frozen to be used if necessary or kept for severance. Potentially

a person could leave the county with 800 hours of sick leave and 480 hours of PTO, a total severance package of 1280 hours.

- Self-insurance: The county is planning to become self insured as of January 2011. It will meet and confer with the Labor/Management Committee on Health. “The employer understands its obligation to **negotiate** if there is a change in the aggregate level of benefits.” This change is supposed to be “seamless”. Employees will hardly notice. We expect to keep the same HealthPartners program we currently have.
- New employee orientation: This was a sticky wicket that wasn’t settled until about the last hour of negotiations. The employer will “refer newly hired AFSCME employees who attend the employer’s New Employee Orientation program to a union orientation session which shall be limited to thirty minutes in length

and held in the same room as the employer’s New Employee Orientation.”

- Associate librarians given in-charge pay: They will receive additional pay if they are in charge of a library in the absence of a supervisor(s) for three hours or more.

A big thank you goes out to all those who worked so hard to make this contract happen. It is far less than perfect, but it’s “less worse” than the initial proposal indicated. Thanks to our Business Rep, Steve Marincel, the Master Team, the Table Team, the Action Team (especially Andrea Lazo-Rice), phone bankers, county board attendees, letter writers, phone callers, ralliers, and those who wore green, wrist bands and stickers. Every single bit helped. A special thank you to those of you who came to vote and said, “Thank you.” You are welcome.

## New to Hennepin County?

If you haven't been approached by a union representative yet, please fill out this form and send to our membership secretary.

To sign up as a full union member or for Delta Dental Insurance, or to get answers to questions about AFSCME and membership benefits, please fill out this coupon and send to:

**Dirk Schot**  
East Lake Library  
Mail Code 760

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Work Location \_\_\_\_\_

Mailcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I want to sign up as a full member.

I want to sign up for Delta Dental.



Help us remember your co-workers with a card. Let us know to send a sympathy card, get well or congratulations. We will send a card, hand-made by President Lynn Stetler.

Contact Heather Clark, our Good and Welfare Coordinator at :952-847-8523 or by e-mail: [hclark@hclib.org](mailto:hclark@hclib.org). The request should include the name of the member, the reason for the request and home address, if possible."



With Delta Access, you can find out about your Delta coverage without even opening your mouth.

Delta Access  
651-406-5900 or 1-800-862-6042.

Always refer to your group number 538.

Council 5 Contact person:  
Cindy Pince, 651-287-0564

### A New Voice deadline is January 6.

Articles will be accepted up to and including the day of the monthly Membership Meeting for inclusion in the following month's newsletter. Send your written contributions to Molly Malecki.



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