

## The economy, the county budget and you

By Lynn Stetler  
Local 2822 President

I have been thinking a lot lately about the slogan "It's the economy, stupid!" This was a sign hung in Bill Clinton's campaign headquarters to keep everybody "on message" in 1992. James Carville put it there. I don't want to call anyone stupid but I find it difficult right now to think about much else except the economy and how it affects everything we do, and my guess is that many of you reading this are feeling the same way.

Most of the calls and e-mails I receive these days and most of the meetings I attend as local president are about the state of the economy and budget for Hennepin County.

The county commissioners no sooner approved a very lean

2009 budget on December 16, 2008 when Governor Pawlenty announced that as a result of the deficit in the state budget that he was unalotting \$10 million that the county had been expecting—money that the county had already spent. What that means is that the county is short \$10 million for the 2009 budget that was supposed to be given to the county from the state. As a result, the 2009 county budget will be re-opened and more cuts are expected.

And there will most likely be even further cuts after the state legislature completes its work.

This is not good news and the reality is most of us will be affected by these cuts. The message that Hennepin County union leaders gave to county commissioners and

administrator last fall was the days of county workers doing more with less are over. The county will have to do less with less; and that is the message that Administrator Richard Johnson gave to the county board. That's still our message and we will continue to deliver that message whenever and wherever we can. We are looking at some very rough times ahead. There have already been some layoffs, some of our co-workers will lose their jobs, others will be reassigned and how we do our jobs will probably change as well.

Our union contract has language about seniority, layoffs and reassignments. I hope you will all read that part of the contract. And keep in mind that with regard to reassignments, the employer has the right to reassign, is not re-

*(Economy continued on page 2)*

## Nomination of officers at February meeting

Nomination of officers will take place at the February 4<sup>th</sup> Membership Meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the Golden Valley Library at 830 Winnetka Ave. N. If there are any contested races, an election will take place at the March Membership Meeting at the Southdale Library at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday March 4. All seats are open for nomination:

president, vice president, recording secretary, treasurer, membership secretary, two co-chief stewards, four at large positions, and one trustee, which is a three year term.

The only qualification for being elected to the Executive Board is being a member in good standing of this local for one year or of a local in

Council 5. Minimum duties of member at-large include attending two meetings per month: the Membership Meeting on the first Wednesday evening of the month and the Executive Board Meeting on the third Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. Anyone interested or with questions should contact an E-Board member. Phone numbers are on the back page.

February						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

**February Membership Meeting**  
Wednesday, February 4  
6:30 p.m.  
Golden Valley Library

**Special order of business:**  
Nomination of officers

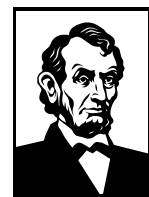
**March Membership Meeting**  
Wednesday, March 4  
7:00 p.m.  
Southdale Library

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



Visit Local 2822 website

<http://www.afscme2822.org>



"Be sure to put your feet in the right place, then stand firm." – Abraham Lincoln

---

# How would you react to a ten dollar a month dues increase?

By Walter Hanson  
Local 2822 Treasurer

As the writer of this article I think that a proposal for a ten dollar a month dues increase would get your attention.

- Emails would be sent immediately to the treasurer and president. The emails might include reactions like, “Don’t you understand money is very tight for me?”
- Angry talk among your co-workers would take place.
- You would find out where the vote on the dues increase would take place so you could vote against it immediately!

Am I warm?

**For the record there is no proposal for a ten dollar a month dues increase!** I played a trick on you to try to make a major point. This year is going to be a rough contract negotiations year. In order to keep the damage of a bad contract to a minimum, we need you to **react** the same way you would to a proposal for a ten

---

*(Economy continued from page 1)*

quired to use seniority at all, and that under the contract, there is no right to “bump” in a reassignment situation. Seniority and geographic area only come into play when there is a layoff. Seniority is covered in Article 6 of our contract. You can find our contract on the Local 2822 website at <http://www.afscme2822.org>, on the Hennepin County Intranet under Labor Relations Department. If anyone wishes a hard copy of the contract, contact an officer or a steward—they are listed on the last page of this news letter.

So while the message here is bleak and the future uncertain, please know that union leaders will continue to fight to protect our jobs and avoid further take-aways from our contract. Within the next few months, we are going to be asking all of you to help spread the message.

Please stay tuned. Take care and be well.

dollar a month dues increase!!!! Lots of **reaction!** A lot of things are at stake this year. Some examples:

- The difference between a 1% pay-raise and a 0% pay-raise for a person who makes \$15.00 an hour is just \$3.00 per week or \$12 per month. If you don’t get a raise of \$12.00 a month from the county will you **react** as you would if the union raised the dues \$10.00 a month?
- The county is likely to ask for an increase in our health insurance premium. Already singles are paying \$17.00 a month. The increase could easily be ten dollars a month or more. Will you **react** to that premium increase as you would a \$10.00 a month dues increase?

That is one reason we endorsed candidates for election and help them win elections. Unfortunately, we have an environment where this does not always work. But we have to pay attention to those we endorse and hold them accountable to the promises they make. There is a county commissioner whom we endorsed, gave

money from our political action fund, and door knocked during his campaign—including me. But he let us down this fall when we were lobbying for the commissioners to set the maximum levy.

This is why we all have to be more active than ever before. Most county employees are constituents of the commissioners, and we have to let them know what is happening in our work areas and what we need them to do to better serve our clients, customers, and citizens. That will be ever so much more effective than having only our Business Agent and a few leaders talk to them.

See the articles in this news letter by Tammy Richert and about Day on the Hill. Take one of these first steps to **REACT** to what lies ahead this year. Join your union brothers and sisters to help make our voices heard about the damage that is befalling our communities and our clients.

Or will you accept the negative consequences without protesting?

## Calling all “possibilitarians”

By Tammy Richert

If we all just did one thing every month for our union, WOW!, what an impact we could make. The time is NOW to get involved at every level. Stronger membership is the GOAL.

Here are some examples:

- Talk about union membership with co-workers.
- Write an article for the *New Voice*.
- Distribute newsletters in your department.
- Volunteer for phone banking (calling fair share employees)
- Attend a union meeting.
- Bring someone to a union meeting.
- Sign up fair share members.

- Share your good ideas and creativity.
- Participate in Day on the Hill—100volunteers needed.
- Sit in on county board meetings.
- Create a flyer or hand out.
- Chart county wide layoff activity.
- Volunteer your services, materials, expertise.

You and I, WE can make a difference. Let’s get busy, let’s get going, let’s get GREAT!



---

## Let's go to Day on the Hill

Mark your calendars for Day on the Hill Tuesday and Wednesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. Day on the Hill is the day Council 5 AFSCME members from all over Minnesota gather to bring their concerns to their legislators. Union members are divided into their own legislative districts and go together to talk to their representatives and senators.

For this session of the Legislature, we need to help shape the Minnesota state budget for the next two years. This budget decides how much money there is to help pay for our jobs and the vital public services we provide at the state, county, city, and school district levels as well as for non-profits and for-profits.

The 2009 legislative session also helps decide how much money is on the table for pay and benefit increases the next time we negotiate our union contracts with these employers.

Those who have attended in the past have found it to be fun, enlightening, motivating and a good way to meet with like-minded people to discuss issues that concern them.

Local 2822 has sent a delegation to Day on the Hill in previous years and will do so again this year. Any member who would like to attend this event should contact an officer or steward. The decision on how many to send will be made at

the February 4<sup>th</sup> Membership Meeting at Golden Valley Library at 6:30 p.m.. This year it is imperative that we send a **large delegation**. And we are asking those who attend to use vacation time or ask to take Special Leave Without Pay. Anyone interested in attending should put in a request for March 10 and 11. If people have to choose one day, they should choose the 11<sup>th</sup>. (The 10<sup>th</sup> will be workshops about our "agenda"; the 11<sup>th</sup> is the day we talk to the legislators.) This is an especially stress-free event for those shy to talk to their legislators. There are usually a few people in each group who have plenty to say. It is an excellent way to "get your feet wet" in the political arena.

## Practical tips to cut healthcare costs

One of the ongoing discussions at the Hennepin County Labor/Management Health Care Committee is how employees can save money on health care. We all have to become proactive in saving money. It is possible that health care savings behavior now will lead to a lower premium increase next year. These ideas are provided by the Hennepin County Benefits Department.

With today's concerns over the economy, everyone is looking for practical ways to cut expenses. Here are some tips on how you can save on your healthcare costs:

- **Use the Web to find lower cost providers.** HealthPartners lists the prices of 83 common services and procedures for 500 primary care, radiology clinics and hospitals in the Twin Cities metro area on [healthpartners.com/hennepin](http://healthpartners.com/hennepin). For example, depending on where you go, an MRI can cost between \$560 and \$2,100 for the same test. You can also see the quality of these providers online. Choosing a lower cost provider can save you hundreds of dollars.

- **Ask about generic drugs.** Generic drugs have the same active ingredients, strength, dosage and quality as the brand version, but they cost a lot less. Visit the HealthPartners drug cost calculator to see if of your brand name drug(s) has a ge-

neric alternative. For example, the following popular brand name drugs have a generic alternative:

- Prevacid for heartburn
- Lipitor for cholesterol
- Nasonex for allergies
- **Get prescriptions by mail order.** HealthPartners offers a Mail Order Pharmacy option that can help you save on your prescriptions. You can order up to a three-month supply of prescriptions for a discounted rate with free shipping. See September 2008 news letter.<sup>99</sup>
- **Split pills.** Cut your prescription bill in half with select medications when you use this program. Splitting higher strength tablets into your prescribed dose saves you money. For example, instead of 30 lower dose tablets, you receive 30 tablets with twice the strength to last for 60 doses — two months for the price of one! Medications, like those for high cholesterol, can safely be cut in half. For the list of eligible medications, please visit [healthpartners.com/hennepin](http://healthpartners.com/hennepin).
- **Visit Well@Work in the Hennepin County Government Center** – Hennepin for your minor acute care concerns, such as a sore throat or sinusitis. You can also get lab work done onsite. And there is **NO CO-PAY**. For more information contact clinic staff at 612-338-3161.

- **Use e-care.** Some clinics, including HealthPartners Clinics, offer e-visits which can save you time and gas money. If the clinic you find by searching the [www.healthpartners.com/hennepin](http://www.healthpartners.com/hennepin) site indicates that it has on-line it will have an on-line services link. Note: service is charged as an office visit for illness/injury co-pay.

- **Use walk-in clinics.** If you have a simple illness such as an ear infection or pink eye, retail or convenience clinics (such as those found in Target stores) can save you about one-third the cost of a traditional office visit according to a recent HealthPartners study.

- **Use Urgent Care whenever possible.** If you need to see a doctor, many doctor's offices, including HealthPartners Clinics, offer walk-in Urgent Care. HealthPartners' study found costs at Urgent Care Clinics were more than \$200 less than a visit to the emergency room. If you ever have a question about where you should go, call HealthPartners CareLine<sup>SM</sup> Service after hours for help getting the right care at the right time.

For more cost-saving suggestions and information about the above services, please log on as a member and explore the new [healthpartners.com/hennepin](http://healthpartners.com/hennepin) or contact HealthPartners at 952-883-5000.

## 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:

**Molly Malecki**  
**Brookdale Service Center**  
**Mail Code N710**

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 E-board member 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 February 4.

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.



Editor: Molly Malecki

Circulation & distribution:  
 Annette Tiedens

## Local 2822 Officers

<b>President</b>	Lynn Stetler <i>lstetler@hclib.org</i>	952-847-8569 Cell:763-245-8285
<b>Vice president</b>	Molly Malecki <i>molly.malecki@co.hennepin.mn.us</i>	612-543-0272
<b>Treasurer</b>	Walter Hanson <i>walter.hanson@co.hennepin.mn.us</i>	612-543-0272 Urgent: 612-543-0270
<b>Recording Sec.</b>	Jeanne Whetstone <i>jwhetstone@hclib.org</i>	952-847-5455
<b>Co-chief Steward</b>	Theresa Smith <i>theresa.smith@co.hennepin.mn.us</i>	612-596-0826 Cell: 763-267-2077
<b>Co-chief Steward</b>	Marilyn Bell <i>mbell@hclib.org</i>	612-630-6702
<b>Membership Sec.</b>	Vacant	
<b>E-Board at Large</b>		
	Neng Lor <i>neng.lor@co.hennepin.mn.us</i>	612-596-1660
	Dirk Schot <i>djschot@hclib.org</i>	612-630-6552
	David Salmon <i>dsalmon@hclib.org</i>	612-630-6464
	Genae Nicole <i>genae.nicole@co.hennepin.mn.us</i>	612-543-3366
<b>Delta Dental Trustee</b>	Ann Baird <i>Ann.baird@co.hennepin.mn.us</i>	763-549-3498
<b>Good &amp; Welfare</b>	Heather Clark <i>hclark@hclib.org</i>	952-847-8523

## Steward's List

Steward	Phone and e-mail	Department and location
Theresa Smith Co-chief Steward	612-596-0826 Cell: 763-267-2077 <i>theresa.smith@co.hennepin.mn.us</i>	Human Services & Public Health Health Services Bldg
Marilyn Bell Co-chief Steward	612-630-6702 <i>mbell@hclib.org</i>	Library Nokomis Library
Janna Carlson	612-596-1660 <i>janna.carlson@co.hennepin.mn.us</i>	Service Center Maple Grove Ser. Cntr.
Walter Hanson	612-543-0272 Urgent: 612-543-0270 <i>walter.hanson@co.hennepin.mn.us</i>	Service Center Brookdale Ser. Cntr.
Neng Lor	612-596-1660 <i>neng.lor@co.hennepin.mn.us</i>	Service Center Maple Grove Ser. Cntr.
Genae Nicole	612-543-3366 <i>m.g.nicole@co.hennepin.mn.us</i>	MHP Grain Exchange Bldg.
Dirk Schot	612-630-6552 <i>djschot@hclib.org</i>	Library East Lake Library
Kathy Sell	612-543-0060 <i>Kathleen.I.Sell@co.hennepin.mn.us</i>	Service Center Ridgedale Ser. Cntr.
Lynn Stetler	952-847-8569 Cell: 763-245-8285 <i>lstetler@hclib.org</i>	Library Ridgedale Library, Collection Management
Velva Stewart	612-596-0722 <i>velva.stewart@co.hennepin.mn.us</i>	MS MHP Grain Exchange Bldg