

HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS

News for Union Members of the Ohio Department of Transportation Assembly

Summer 2006

VOL. 13, NO. 2

President's Corner

Dear ODOT Sisters and Brothers...

Dear ODOT Sisters and Brothers:

Thank you for being safe and creating safe driving during Ohio's snow and ice season. Now, the warmer months bring new challenges for keeping us alert and safe.

Keeping alert – The ODOT agency specific contract set all overtime hours to zero this one time only. Keep track of your overtime. If you are wrongly by-passed, file that grievance. When we use the contract we all benefit.

Keeping safe – If it looks weird, leave it alone. Meth waste and human waste are real dangers to each and every ODOT employee and our customers. Trust your instincts if it looks weird – leave it alone. Call OSP and your supervisor.

In Solidarity,
Kate Callahan



KATE CALLAHAN
ODOT Assembly
President

HT Series Update

Union negotiates for \$3000 bonus to be PERS eligible

The labor/management dispute and enforcement committee for the HT Series have agreed that in order to make the \$3000 bonus count toward an employees' retirement that the amount would be paid as a percentage of an employee's pay, not as a lump sum. The union negotiated at the beginning of the process that HMW 4s, MC 3s, RM 2s, BW 2s and PI 2s (PR 10) would receive a \$3000 bonus for completing the requirements for entering the HT series.

But because the IRS does not allow lump sum bonuses to count towards retirement, affected employees will be paid 6 percent of their annual salary (employee's total hourly rate x 2080 hour). The difference will be made up with a small monetary adjustment that will not be PERS eligible. The combined amount won't exceed \$3,000. This way, almost all the payment will count towards an employees' retirement calculation. For information on this pay arrangement, please contact your union HT coordinator.

Union makes push to help ALL enter HT Series

The union is making an intensive push to make sure everyone who wants to get into the Highway Technician Series does so. A union committee comprised of ODOT Assembly President **Kate Callahan**, Vice President **Margaret Smith** and Statewide HT Coordinator **Hugh Williams** has been meeting to put together an adult learning program that will be rolled out regionally to help those who are having difficulty with the math portion of the HT series.

The union committee recently met with the State Department of Education which is helping put together the program. Employees affected will be matched with an adult learning center in their area and then be offered a program based on their individual needs. The training will be paid for by OCSEA. However, employees must use their own time. Once the program is put

(Continued on reverse)

OCSEA helps get "Trucker Bomb" bill introduced

Members of OCSEA's ODOT Health and Safety Committee have long complained about the risks involved in roadside clean up and mowing due to hazardous waste along the highways. Now it appears their protests have finally been heard.

Before legislators' summer break, a new bill was introduced by Senator Kim Zurz, D-Green, that would inflict stiff penalties on drivers who toss out "urine bombs" or "trucker bombs" along Ohio's roadsides. The bill would impose a maximum \$1,000 fine and a minimum \$150 fine on violators.

The bill came after the release of a study by ODOT indicating there are over one million containers of urine dumped along Ohio's highways each year.

Although the bill failed to pass before lawmaker's summer recess, OCSEA activists will be monitoring the bill when session starts in the fall.



Other health and safety news: Meth labs

Another hot topic that OCSEA activists are monitoring involves the clean up of methamphetamine (meth) residue that is dropped along the roadside. Union members on the Health and Safety Committee requested and will receive a training on the handling of this noxious material found in bottles and other containers at rest areas, in abandoned vehicles and along the roads. Exposure to these



Highway workers listen at a training on keeping safe when working around hazardous energy sources. The workshop on the "Lockout/Tagout" procedure was arranged by the statewide labor/management Health and Safety Committee.


Although the bill could be an important first step in addressing the roadside waste problem, enforcement is still a big hurdle. **Hugh Williams**, OCSEA's Statewide HT Coordinator, was recently interviewed by a local Columbus alternative paper about the difficulty in enforcing such a law.

"They can pass the law, but it ain't gonna help," he said. "There's some nasty truck drivers out there. They'll just wait 'til they get out of sight to toss it."

Williams' ODOT truck was hit with a urine bomb last year while inspecting roadwork at the Polaris interchange near OCSEA HQ.

materials can cause serious and sometimes permanent injury.

The train-the-trainer program is scheduled for June 27 at ODOT central office. Members of the statewide Health and Safety Committee will be attending. Training will be put on by Dennis Lowe, a special agent with the Bureau of Criminal Investigation.

In addition, meth lab information has been posted on ODOT's Safety Intranet home page and is available in a Power Point presentation. For more information contact your district statewide health and safety representative. 

ASSEMBLY

OFFICERS

Kate Callahan – president
Margaret Smith – vice president
Cheryl Evans – secretary
Jill Powers – treasurer

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Kerry Dean
Peter Martin
Willa O'Neill
George Wagner
Ron Wiech

OCSEA STAFF

Lynn Belcher, Staff Rep
Harold Bumgardner, Staff Rep
Jerry Buty, Staff Rep
Dennis Falcione, Staff Rep
John Gersper, Staff Rep
Bob Jones, Staff Rep
Lynn Kemp, Staff Rep
Sally Meckling, Communications
Mike Muenchen, Staff Rep
Tim Rippeth, Staff Rep
Peggy Tunksley, Staff Rep
Sandy Trout, Administrative Support
Karen Vroman, Staff Rep
Butch Wylie, Staff Rep
Bruce Wyngaard, Operations Director

ACCESS

Union Web Site, www.ocsea.org
Union Customer Service, (888)OCSEA-11
Automated Line (to reach staff), (800)969-4702
Address Changes, (800)266-5615, ext. 2273
Benefits Trust Hotline, (800)228-5088
Workforce Development Hotline, 888-800-0074

HT Series Update

(Continued from front)

together, union leaders will be contacted with information on how to help their members sign up.

In other HT news...

The mandated pay freeze for those who fail to enter the HT series by November of this year won't affect anyone's pay raise until July of next year. Everyone will get their union-negotiated 3 percent pay increase this year. The freeze, however, could affect an employee's longevity and step increases if he or she fails to get in the series. Also, see story on \$3000 bonus. **STOP**

HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS

News for Union Members of the Ohio Department of Transportation Assembly

The Ohio Civil Service Employees Association

AFSCME Local 11 • AFL-CIO
390 Worthington Road - Suite A
Westerville, OH 43082-8331

First Class Pre-Sort
U.S. Postage
PAID
Columbus, OH
Permit No. 658

ODOT survey shows employees want respect on the job

The results of a recent survey of ODOT employee satisfaction gives some insight into how ODOT workers view their job, their union, their fellow employees and management.

Last year, ODOT's Quality Steering Committee was involved in putting together a proposal to do a survey of the job satisfaction rate of ODOT employees. The team, which included union representatives, commissioned an outside firm to conduct the study.

The survey showed that overall employee satisfaction was just 63.7 percent, a figure that puts ODOT at a lower rate than 50 percent of all companies and organizations surveyed by the outside firm. It's a figure the Director acknowledges needs to be improved.

Not surprisingly from the union's perspective, the study showed that ODOT employees still feel there is inconsistent treatment of employees by management and that employees are not recognized for the work they do.

However, the survey also showed that employees are most satisfied with their rela-

tionships with their co-workers and that employees in general enjoy their job. Other important issues for ODOT employees according to the survey are the availability of promotional opportunities and being given the authority to do their job.

While some districts like District 12 have already established benchmarks as a result of the survey and are in the process of finding ways to improve employee satisfaction, each district will be using the survey information differently.

Union Statewide Quality Coordinator Willa O'Neill hopes that the union and particularly those involved in quality will take this opportunity to help lead their district in developing benchmarks for improvement. "It's no accident that those districts who have been involved in Quality are the ones in the forefront on this issue and the union has always had a big role in the quality processes within ODOT," said O'Neill.

For more information on what your district is doing to improve employee satisfaction, contact your Union Quality Coordinator. **STOP**



Members of the District 10 Quality Steering Committee, manager Bill McElfresh and Union

Quality Coordinator Cecilia Sciance, use a Star Trek theme to illustrate that the district received the Governor's Award also known as a Tier 4 or the highest level from the Ohio Award for Excellence.



ODOT Assembly Vice President Margaret Smith poses with the ODOT Assembly display. The display illustrates how ODOT union leaders fulfill the Assembly's mission.



UPCOMING ODOT ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

July 15, 2006
Sept. 16, 2006
Nov. 18, 2006

All ODOT employees are welcome to attend Assembly meetings which are held at OCSEA, 390 Worthington Road, Westerville, OH. Meetings start at 10 a.m.

A LIGHT CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST WILL BE PROVIDED.

At Building Union Power 6...

ODOT Assembly President Kate Callahan shows her winning raffle ticket to Education Director Mike Jones at the Building Union Power Conference. Kate won a plasma TV but gave it back to the Women's Action Committee.

