



Three hundred new jobs in ODJFS to benefit out-of-work Ohioans, OCSEA members

In what OCSEA is calling a great thing for unemployed and under-employed Ohioans and the public employees who serve them, it was announced last week that the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services will add 300 full-time and intermittent positions to the payroll.

The agency and union have been working closely to iron out the details regarding the position increase. Both believe these added employees will help address significant workload increases as the result of double digit unemployment numbers and the recent extension of unemployment benefits.

Per the OCSEA contract, lateral and promotion appointments will be offered to internal applicants first; however, after existing ODJFS employees are placed, the remaining positions will be offered to OCSEA members who are on layoff lists.

Federal funding, not General Revenue Funds, will pay for these positions. Two hundred positions will be placed in the agency's Office of Local Operations and 100 positions will be

in the Office of Unemployment Compensation.

Local Operations, which registers and processes unemployment claims, will see 120 full-time permanent positions (70 Call Center jobs and 50 processing center jobs) and 80 intermittent positions. Unemployment Compensation, which adjudicates unemployment claims, will see 69 Claim Examiner 4 positions, two Claims Specialist 1s, two Claims Specialist 2s, seven manager positions and 20 intermittent positions.

OCSEA has been meeting with the agency to ensure that the contractual rights of OCSEA members are not violated and to help expedite the process. The union has also asked for up-to-date and accurate layoff lists to ensure that we can maximize job matches with laid off members.

"Our members have really felt the pinch of this economy," said OCSEA/ODJFS Assembly President Tommy Jones. "Whether they've been impacted by a layoff or by increased workloads, they need some relief. I'm hopeful these new positions will give them the relief they need." *

Union: Budget impasse hurting Ohioans

A group of Senate Republicans have stubbornly dug their heels in and are refusing to budge in providing any answer to the state's latest budget deficit.

Gov. Ted Strickland proposed back in October a fix that would help fill an \$850 million dollar budget divot by stalling the last phase of an income tax cut for 2009 – a proposal OCSEA supports and believes is a responsible solution to the state's dilemma.

But a budget stalemate has emerged between Senate Republicans on the one hand and House Democrats and the governor on the other. The logjam has many Statehouse watchers wondering whether things will ever be resolved with respect to Ohio's latest budget deficit, or if education will fall victim to this latest trick by conservatives.

Republican Senators have refused to sign on and have come up with their own substitute bill. This latest concoction – while doing nothing to fix the budget hole in the short term – includes a mix of construction and prison sentencing reforms that the Senators claim they just have to have, if they're going to go along with the tax cut freeze.

But OCSEA and other government watchdog groups say these reform proposals have no place in a midyear budget bill and that the right thing to do is let the bill move forward as is.

Meanwhile, deadline after deadline has passed to get the budget bill passed. Tax Commissioner Rich Levin said he needed resolution by Dec. 7 to ensure tax forms are complete for next year – but that deadline passed.

"These lawmakers need to stop playing chicken with the state budget. The bill is simple; it's straightforward and will get the job done. Anything else is just muddying the waters," said OCSEA President Eddie L. Parks.

For budget updates, visit www.ocsea.org/budget. *

Oil & gas fee increase would mean 33 new jobs in ODNR

OCSEA supports the substitute version of Senate Bill 165, Ohio's Oil and Gas Law, which would increase the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Mineral Resource Management's revenue by more than 50 percent through a fee increase.

The language was recently adopted by a Senate committee, however, due to last minute concerns over the increase, it was pulled from the full Senate version. A commitment has been made to revisit it in the House version.

OCSEA continues to work with ODNR and legislators to get the language restored as the increase would help stabilize the division and allow for the hiring of an additional 33 full-time employees in ODNR. *

Pension system addresses losses, makes difficult choices

As many OCSEA members already know, many factors have taken a toll on the pension fund recently, including the cost of health care, the downsizing of state and local governments and the fact that as a group we are living longer.

All of these realities had caused the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees to begin to look at a number of plan changes over the past year since recent actuarial reports put the fund outside the 30-year time frame required to pay off its pension liabilities.

But the economic downturn of 2008 and the major investment losses made OPERS redouble its efforts to ensure that your pension benefit design strengthened the fund and protected health care. In fact, without any changes to the plan design, OPERS would be in danger of losing health care for retirees beginning 2014.

(see **Pension** on back...)

What's inside...

Three hundred new jobs in ODJFS to benefit out-of-work Ohioans, vOCSEA members

Union: Budget impasse hurting Ohioans

Oil & gas law to add 33 new jobs in ODNR

Pension system addresses losses, makes difficult choices

Mansfield chapter makes a difference

Health exigency legislation proposed

Dependent health care terminated Nov. 30?
It's not too late to reinstate!

High Performance Award deadline is Jan. 16

Mansfield chapter makes a difference



Members of Mansfield Correctional Chap. 7010 recently volunteered their time to help the Ohio State University Alumni of Richland County with their annual Buckeye Bash. Members helped raise over \$5,000 of the event's \$20,000 for scholarships at the OSU Mansfield Branch.

Health exigency legislation proposed

The Ohio House introduced House Bill 357, health exigency legislation that includes guidelines regarding mandatory leave for public employees during a health exigency.

While state agencies, on directive from the governor, updated their own emergency preparedness plans this year with the outbreak of the H1N1 influenza virus, H.B. 357 permits the governor to declare the existence of a health exigency and issue orders necessary to activate plans to address it. This legislation will ultimately guide the State's final policy.

Under the proposed legislation:

- An agency appointing authority would be permitted to require an employee who demonstrates at least one symptom included in the governor's declaration of a health exigency to immediately leave the workplace.
- An appointing authority would be required to reinstate an employee on the employee's demonstration that the employee is asymptomatic of the illness or condition laid out in the health exigency declaration.
- Employees are permitted to use sick leave, vacation leave, personal leave, or compensatory time, or to take a leave of absence without pay, in order to cover the time the employee is away from work as a result of being required to leave the workplace.
- The requirement for mandatory leave during a health exigency would prevail over collective bargaining agreements entered into before, on, or after the bill's effective date. *



Ohio Civil Service Employees Association
AFSCME • Local 11 • AFL-CIO
390 Worthington Road, Ste. A
Westerville, OH 43082-8331

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Dependent health care terminated Nov. 30? It's not too late to reinstate!

OCSEA members whose dependents were terminated Nov. 30 can have their dependents' health care and Union Benefits Trust dental and vision coverage reinstated prior to the summer 2010 open enrollment period if proper documentation for eligible dependents can be provided.

- **Health care coverage reinstatement:** Employees should contact **DAS Benefits Administration at 800-409-1205**. Once eligibility is established, coverage will begin the first of the following month.
- **Union Benefits Trust reinstatement:** Dental and vision reinstatement must be done directly through the **Union Benefits Trust**. Required documentation should be faxed to **614-508-0025**, emailed to **customerservice@benefitstrust.org** OR mailed to: **Union Benefits Trust, 390 Worthington Rd. Suite B, Westerville, Ohio 43082**.

Joint Health Care Committee union members advocated for this pre-open enrollment reinstatement because they felt the goal of the audit to reduce costs associated with ineligible dependents was met. They didn't want truly eligible dependents to be punished with termination because the person carrying the insurance, for whatever reason, did not respond to eligibility verification requests.

Visit www.ocsea.org/healthcare to review the documents required to prove dependent eligibility. *

(from Pension on front...)

The Ohio Retirement Study Council, the legislative group charged with overseeing the public pension systems, at the same time, had also required all of Ohio's pension systems to consider a number of plan changes to remain within their statutory obligations.

OPERS has posted the recommended changes on its website at www.opers.org. *

High Performance Award deadline is Jan. 16



To celebrate the outstanding achievements of subordinate bodies, OCSEA recognizes those efforts through its High Performance Initiative Award.

Chapters, district councils and assemblies are recognized in five categories: Internal Organizing, Coalition Building, Communications, Administration, and Innovation.

The deadline for nominations is Jan. 16. Download a registration form or request one by contacting **Judi Ayers at 800-266-5615, ext. 2656, or jayers@ocsea.org**. *