

New budget forecast grim; OCSEA leaders brace for news

Another massive budget hole for the current fiscal year has OCSEA leaders on edge as budget discussions wrap up and the state Senate finishes up work on its version of the budget.

While the Ohio House version passed in late April has few damaging funding cuts to state services and OCSEA members, new budget projections are anticipating at least a \$1 billion shortfall for FY 2009 and as much as \$3 billion for FY 2010-2011 that will have to be made up somehow.

Speculation is rampant about how Gov. Ted Strickland will fill the gap, but many assume the Rainy Day Fund will be used, which will leave a gaping hole in the House and Governor's proposed budget for the next biennium. Strickland had proposed using most of the Rainy Day Fund for the 2010-2011 budget along with other one-time money from the federal stimulus.

But if the Rainy Day Fund is tapped now, the question becomes how will the next biennium budget make it up.

Officeholders on both sides of the aisle are warning that it is likely that cuts will again have to be made to state government since both parties agree that raising taxes is not in the best interest of Ohioans right now.

How those cuts will shake out is anyone's guess, but the deficit will likely set the stage for a knockdown, drag out fight in conference committee.

Union leaders said those cuts should not come from the rank and file. "OCSEA and allies of public services believe that cutting essential services would not be in the best interests of Ohioans," said OCSEA Pres. Eddie L. Parks.

"As we've said time and again, we gave at the office," said Parks of talk about further cuts. "Not only will our contract save \$250 million over the next two years, but joint labor/management cost savings committees in nearly every agency are working around the clock to come up with ways to save," he added.

In ODJFS, a joint labor/management committee recommendation has the agency moving forward with office consolidations that will merge seven facilities into existing work-sites. The move will save in lease costs, utilities and upkeep.

In DR&C, OCSEA leaders and management are looking at ways to save money by merging the private DUI facility, NC-CTF, into Grafton Correctional Institution.

In DYS, a cost saving group has made recommendations to bring down medical costs in that agency.

"As jobs continue to shrink in Ohio and credit markets dry up, there is little good news for the average Ohioan right now. But downsizing state government and eliminating safety net services would be the nail in the coffin for struggling families," said Parks.

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



SAVE STATEHOUSE JOBS!

**Statehouse Rally
to Protect CSRAB jobs!**

Wed. May 20

11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Ohio Statehouse, Columbus

As a result, OCSEA members have already written more than 250 letters urging state senators to help stop the proposed program and asking CSRAB to call back the laid-off workers. OCSEA Pres. Eddie L. Parks has contacted state officials and legislators, asking for reconsideration.

"We're starting to get some leverage. Our collective voices are being heard," said Parks, who received word last week that four bargaining unit laborer positions will likely be recalled and that use of non-violent offenders for this work is on hold.

"We're not out of the water. It still remains to be seen whether our folks will continue to do this work that they've done for so long," said OCSEA Secretary-Treasurer Kathy Stewart, who is organizing a May 20 Statehouse rally to oppose the work release program. "We have to be vigilant and vocal to make sure that history stays in the right hands." *

Support OCSEA Statehouse work

OCSEA activists were outraged when the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board proposed the implementation of an inmate work release program to replace OCSEA bargaining unit employees laid off as the result of budget cuts. These employees performed custodial, grounds keeping and other duties at the Ohio Statehouse.

"Remember the Price of Freedom" at first-ever OCSEA Veterans Conference

The first-ever OCSEA Veterans Conference will be held July 10-11 at Deer Creek Resort and Conference Center in Mt. Sterling.

"It's important that we honor and remember the men and women in the armed forces, including those union members who have and continue to serve," said Veterans Committee chair and OCSEA Vice Pres. Chris Mabe.

"Our freedoms, including the right to bargain collectively, don't come free and we must thank our service men and women for making them possible," Mabe said.

The deadline to submit the registration form to OCSEA is June 26. Forms were sent to all chapter presidents and secretaries and can also be found online at www.ocsea.org/veterans. Registration includes the Friday night reception, conference program and Saturday lunch.

Room rates are \$119.00 per night and must be made directly through the Deer Creek Resort and Conference Center.

If you have questions regarding the conference, contact **Gina Ison at 800-969-4702, ext. 4706** or at gison@ocsea.org. *



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Union Plus safety net program extends a helping hand

Good news is sometimes hard to come by in economic times like these. Fortunately, expanded Union Plus benefits provided under an innovative program called Union SAFE (Security, Assistance and Financial Education) offer a new way to help members facing economic hardship. Union SAFE offers a wide array of family supportive programs and benefits – from financial counseling and assistance with high hospital bills to added home protection and college saving grants – designed to help members caught in the grip of the current economic disaster.

To learn more and apply, visit www.UnionPlus.org/UnionSAFE. *

OCSEA grieves loss of friend, parliamentarian

As OCSEA continued preparations for its 28th Biennial Convention set for Aug. 13-15, union leaders received word that a friend and esteemed parliamentarian passed away. Maurice L. "Snookey" Reed died Wednesday, May 6.

Over the years, union staff, leaders and hundreds of delegates to OCSEA's biennial conventions had the pleasure of getting to know Reed, who was a repeat presenter at the "New Delegates" workshop and helped union leaders keep order at the podium and on the convention floor.

He will be especially missed by many for his easy smile, friendship and expertise. *



Maurice L. "Snookey" Reed

OCSEA retiree honored for service to community



Dru Bagley, Columbus NCNW honoree

Congratulations to OCSEA retiree and Franklin County community activist Dru Bagley who was the recipient of the 2009 Outstanding Community Service Award by the Columbus National Council of Negro Women.

Dru, who is extremely active as the Greater Hilltop Area Commissioner, was honored for her community service, particularly in the areas of public health, at the Columbus NCNW annual luncheon held on May 16.

Additionally, Dru's accomplishment was honored with a resolution by Columbus City Council on May 18.

Aside from issues of health, Dru has also been active in voter registration and issues pertaining to public safety. *



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

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Joint committee releases six new IT classification groupings

After months of focused work on the project, the Joint IT Labor/Management Committee is unveiling six new IT groupings and 18 classifications that have been signed off on by the union and management.

The new class groupings are Business Process Analysis, Database Administration, Information Technologist, Infrastructure, IT Architect Consultant, and Software Development Specialist.

OCSEA members in IT classifications are being encouraged to download the class grouping specifications at www.ocsea.org/infotech and assess where their current job duties might fall.

During the transition to the new class structure, IT employees will be asked to fill out a Duty Identification Tool (DIT) to explain the job duties they currently perform. Employees will be moved into their new classifications, in part, based on how this tool is completed.

The transition to the new classifications will take place agency by agency. However, no information is currently available regarding agency roll-out plans. It could take as long as two years to implement statewide.

For more information on the transition process, refer to Article 36.05B of the OCSEA Tentative Agreement.

Contact **Sandi Friel at 800-969-4702, ext. 4713** with questions. *

AFSCME Family Fun coupons available

This summer you and your family can take advantage of a variety of AFSCME Family Fun Day coupon and online offers, including

with your OCSEA/AFSCME or Retiree Chapter 1184 Union Membership Card.

discounted prices for amusement parks, zoos and other attractions. These offers – for members only – can be found at www.ocsea.org/coupons.

Membership cards were mailed out in February with the

Winter Public Employee Quarterly (Tentative Agreement). Dues-paying members needing a replacement card should email Shana Cone at scone@ocsea.org.

Printed copies are also available for pick up at the receptionist desk at OCSEA headquarters.

For downloadable coupons, simply print them and present them at the park ticket sales counter along

the link and password provided on the coupon. For more on OCSEA membership, visit www.ocsea.org/join *

