

July 1, 2010

UWUA Executive Board & Staff Members:

The Utility Workers Union of America, extends its sincere condolences to the family of Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV), the longest serving member of Congress in United States history. He was 92. It is said of him that he never forgot his humble beginnings nor who he represented. He left a legacy of service to which we all aspire.



As I mentioned in my first E-News Letter, the purpose of this communication is to keep Executive Board and staff members up to date on important events as they happen. Its success is dependent upon you. We need YOU to let us know of any and all news-worthy events, the status of current negotiations, arbitration outcomes, both wins and losses. Whatever is happening with you and your members, let us know so that we can share it. And we need YOU to pass this newsletter along – to locals, officers, members, colleagues – anyone you think might benefit from knowing what’s happening at the UWUA.

Mike Langford
UWUA National President

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UWUA Awarded Grant by NIEHS. The UWUA was recently notified that it has been awarded a grant which will provide \$407,795 a year (for five years) for a Safety & Health training program through the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS). We continue to await word from the US Department of Energy on a second grant application, which could mean additional funding for Safety & Health training. The programs funded by these monies will be designed to assist in the preparation and response training needed for natural and unnatural disasters that occur in our industries. We all know that it is our members who are some of the first responders when emergencies occur, and it is comforting to know that they will be properly prepared. Applying for such grants is a complex and tedious process and the team effort extended should be commended.

UWUA Local 1-2 Reaches Tentative Agreement for Members at NRG Energy. Despite sometimes contentious negotiations, Local 1-2 successfully concluded negotiations for 17 members that work for NRG Energy at a plant in Queens, New York. (See attached letter explaining the details of the contract to members.) Highlights include wage increases of 3% per year and successful resistance to NRG’s demands for givebacks. Congratulations Local 1-2 NRG Negotiating Team and NRG Energy members!

UWUA Reaches Two Tentative Agreements for Michigan Workers. A tentative agreement has been reached with Utility Lines Construction Services, Inc. for over 200 transmission workers throughout Michigan. A second tentative agreement has been reached with Hydaker-Wheatlake Company for 26 members from Local 223 Transmission Lines. Among the improvements in both agreements are additional holidays and personal time, increases in health and welfare contributions, company paid union business time with meal allowances, and wage increases. There were NO CONCESSIONS in either contract. Congratulations for giving nothing back!

UWUA to Launch Young Worker Initiative. The National is in the process of appointing a steering committee to direct a UWUA Young Workers Initiative. National Representative Reggie Davis, who attended the recent AFL-CIO’s Young Workers Summit, will be chairing this committee of bold young leaders and activists who will help write the blueprint for the UWUA of tomorrow. The committee will allow the younger voices of UWUA members a forum to share their concerns and visions as those who will be next in line to lead the union forward. Our own UWUA Young Workers Summit will be incorporated into the 2011 Convention and will include speakers, panel discussions and a proposed National Resolution.

UWUA Power for America Training Trust was recently awarded a contract to provide customer call center “soft skills” training to 120 members of UWUA Local 686 who are employed by the Philadelphia Gas Works (PGW) Company. Working in conjunction with the UWUA National Staff, the employer and the training provider, Local 686 President Keith Holmes assisted in identifying the specific training needs required to enhance the skills sets of the PGW call center employees. The UWUA Power for America Training Trust will utilize the services of Matthews & Matthews Consulting, a nationally recognized curriculum developer and training provider to deliver the training mandated in the PGW contract. This training initiative is another example of the types of training programs and services that can be provided by the UWUA Power for America Training Trust Fund to Local Unions and Employers across the country.

UWUA to Redesign Website. As part of a long-range plan to address the ever-changing ways in which we receive information today, the current UWUA website is being updated. Professional review of the current website has noted that the current site is exemplary in terms of its informational content, but a new, more dynamic design will better incorporate all forms of current electronic communications. As well we expect the site to be more user friendly and will provide users the opportunity to use the website as a home page with direct links to search engines (Google, Yahoo, MSN, weather) and social networks (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, Skype). Look for extensive use of photos and videos and daily content update. As the site develops, it will include links to extensive educational and instructional materials and offer log-in access for officers and staff to access databases and other professional information. Watch for changes over the next several weeks. Tell us what you think and, by all means, let us know what you need.

ITUC Congress Elects Sharon Burrow, General Secretary. The second world congress of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia on June 21-25, elected Sharon Burrow to become the first woman to head a global trade union body. Burrow succeeds Guy Ryder as the second General Secretary of the ITUC, which was created in Vienna in 2006, and leaves her position as president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, a post that she has held since 2000. She has been the President of the ITUC and its predecessor, the ICFTU, since 2004. The main focus of the congress was the issues related to labor’s demands for restructuring and reform of the global economy. The congress called on G20 governments to increase economic stimulus to create more jobs. Michael Sommer with DGB (Confederation of German Trade Unions) was elected ITUC President.

PSI Welcomes New President. The meeting of the PSI Steering Committee in May 2010 was the last meeting attended by Ylva Thörn, who has retired as leader of Kommunal in Sweden, and stepped down as president of PSI. She is replaced by first vice-president Dave Prentis. Ylva has been PSI president since 2002, and president of her union, Kommunal in Sweden, since 1996. Ylva assures us that she will still follow PSI with interest and we wish her the best in her future ventures. Dave Prentis is general secretary of the UK’s biggest public sector union, Unison. He is a member of the UK Trades Union Congress (TUC) general council, TUC executive committee and the Trade Union Labour Party Liaison Committee. PSI welcomes Dave as our new PSI President.