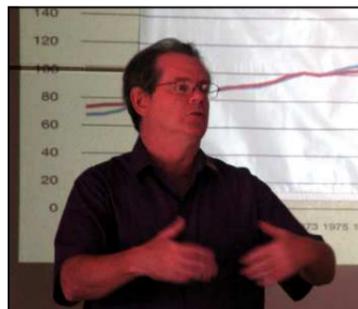


# The Fight for a Fair Economy Starts with us, starting now.



**Tom Woodruff, SEIU**  
Executive Vice President, gives a presentation about the economy on July 15 in Fresno.

It is clear to all of us that our economy is not working. The SEIU 521 Executive Board and a dozen other member leaders met July 15-16 in Fresno to discuss how we can build the Fight for a Fair Economy campaign into a national movement.

Breaking into working groups, participants of the Member Leader Action Conference (MLAC) planned ways to reach out to fellow members and the greater community to talk about our economy and why it's failing the middle class.

Members and the Executive Board also heard a presentation from Tom Woodruff (left), Executive Vice President of SEIU, who showed how top corporate officers are making hundreds or even thousands of dollars per hour while millions of workers remain unemployed and are losing their homes. Meanwhile, the tax rate on those top earners has dropped.

At the top of the heap is General Electric, whose CEO chairs the President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness, but which pays no taxes on its billions of dollars in profits. Imagine - you paid more income tax in 2010 than GE did! "They didn't pay for a single bulletproof vest for a soldier in Afghanistan," Woodruff pointed out.

The members concluded that SEIU 521 workers must work together to change not just laws but society's attitudes. To preserve and strengthen the middle class, we need to ensure that the fruits of our collective labor are equitably distributed and that all workers - not just executives - can have the security of a contract.

A video of Tom Woodruff's Fight for a Fair Economy PowerPoint presentation will be posted online shortly.

**NEXT UP:** A follow-up to the Member Leader Action Conference is scheduled for Aug. 22 via telephone and video-conference. Delegates attending SEIU 521's Biennial Convention, Oct. 7-9, will be charged with drafting ideas of how to take the Fight for a Fair Economy to our worksites.



"We have a labor situation today because we are not adequately organized to fight back and we must recruit and build a more participatory labor movement for the Fight for a Fair Economy."

-- **Ellen Rollins, IHSS Rehabilitation Specialist**

"I enjoyed and appreciated having the opportunity to give ideas and thoughts how to spread the message for a fair economy. Participation in union activities is crucial to lifting the living standards of the working person."

-- **Scott Johnson, AchieveKids Program Counselor**



## region 2 offices

### MONTEREY COUNTY

334 MONTEREY STREET, SALINAS

831-784-2560

### SAN BENITO COUNTY

449 SAN BENITO STREET SUITE 24, HOLLISTER

831-636-3455

### SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

517 B MISSION STREET, SANTA CRUZ

831-824-9255

# STAY INFORMED!

Website: [www.seiu521.org](http://www.seiu521.org)

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# REGION 2 IN ACTION



JULY 2011 - VOLUME 2

A NEWSLETTER FOR SEIU LOCAL 521 MEMBERS IN THE COUNTIES OF MONTEREY, SAN BENITO, & SANTA CRUZ

## Across the region Units ratify contracts

With the overall goals of saving jobs and protecting services during a bad economy, members from Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito counties, and the City of Salinas all ratified their contracts this quarter.

### Santa Cruz County

Members ratified their contract on July 8 with about 80% YES votes. Faced with a \$14 million county deficit - and approximately 80 jobs on the chopping block - the Bargaining Team worked hard to protect healthcare, save as many jobs as possible, and ensure that workers didn't have to contribute more than their fair share to balance the budget.

#### Highlights:

- ◇ Two-year contract
- ◇ Lessened healthcare increases
- ◇ Minimized layoffs to 25
- ◇ Maintained our right to bargain over furloughs



Jeanette Duqui and Karen Salazar

### Monterey County

Monterey County members overwhelmingly ratified their contract with more than 83% voting YES on July 7. With the County still feeling the pinch of the recession, and budget deficits reaching the state level, the bargaining team worked hard to ensure that saving jobs and services was priority #1.



Brian Agolia signs in before voting.

#### Highlights:

- ◇ The two-year contract
- ◇ Employer-paid healthcare: NO CHANGE
- ◇ 3.5% employee contribution to retirement plan
- ◇ 1% one-time signing bonus at step 7
- ◇ 4 paid days off, during winter recess or floating holidays
- ◇ Formation of a Labor Management Committee of

### City of Salinas

After months of negotiations, members from three City of Salinas units represented by SEIU 521 ratified their contracts with no layoffs and no increases in healthcare premiums during the term of the contract. Salinas workers were originally facing 66 layoffs, but managed to protect jobs by working with the city in finding alternatives to job cuts.



Randy Casey, John Falkenberg & Susan Anda

#### Highlights:

- ◇ Four-year extension to December 31, 2015
- ◇ No layoffs
- ◇ No increases in healthcare premiums during the term of the contract

### San Benito County

Members ratified a one-year contract extension on May 18.

#### Highlights:

- ◇ 1 percent salary increase for October 2011
- ◇ 2.5% pay increase for communications dispatchers to offset their previous furlough pay cut
- ◇ Maintains 15 days of furlough per year for two years for the general fund departments only.
- ◇ Installs step freezes for all unit employees for two years

## FIGHTING FOR FAIR COMPENSATION FOR ALL, **NOT JUST A FEW!**

Salud Para La Gente is trying to delete salary steps and COLAs for workers and replace them with a merit-pay system.

Salud workers think that is WRONG and called for mediation but that was also rejected by Management, along with contract proposals from the workers.

Merit pay, implemented with the current group of managers, will only foster nepotism, cronyism, and favoritism. Our collective work is what keeps the clinics going and thriving. Salud Para La Gente is even adding more sites in Monterey County, because of all we do.

We ALL work hard to provide the best services to our clients, and we ALL need to be compensated fairly.

A merit-pay system results in disparate treatment of employees which leads to demoralized workers. THIS IS NOT the way to keep quality services high for clients.

Salud workers attended the Board of Directors meeting on July 25 to insist on a fair contract for all!

"We want the employer to adopt standards that would prevent favoritism. The way it is now, we already see some who get better scheduling and assignments based on how well they get along with managers." – **NICK SANDOVAL**, Health Educator

## Region 2 Will See Some Staff Changes This Summer

Look for some new faces from SEIU Local 521 staff in August, starting with new Regional Director Deborah Dominguez. Deborah replaces former Director Susan Strubbe, who is applying her vast organizing skills and talents to her new position as SEIU California's State Organizing Director.

Deborah comes to us from SEIU Local 721 in Los Angeles, where she was Director of Internal Organizing for Los Angeles County and Special Districts. She is a former rank and file member who has a commitment and passion to working families and the social justice movement.

We will also have two new organizers joining Region 2 in August: Bryce Stoepfel & Adam Urrutia.

Bryce was an Administrative Organizer with SEIU 1199 in West Virginia, Kentucky, and Ohio.

Adam is not really new to SEIU 521, having worked as a community and political organizer in Tulare County for the past several years where he successfully organized local coalitions to join in campaigns for working families. Adam's keen understanding of politics and natural energy with members will help Region 2 become a greater political and community force.

As we welcome Debbie, Bryce and Adam, we also want to thank Joe Keffer for his unwavering dedication to working families and the labor movement. Joe will be moving to Richmond.

## MEMBERS DEFEND SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS AT CITY COUNCIL

City of Santa Cruz members attended the City Council meeting on July 26 to speak against cutting Social Security benefits for temporary workers.

Our contract negotiations have gone to impasse and we are now in mediation.

The City is claiming a \$2.4 million deficit and wants us to foot \$1.12 million in cost savings – almost half.

City Council may also impose the elimination of Social Security benefits for temp employees to save \$129,000, although we've offered other solutions to achieve these savings. Instead of Social Security, the City wants to place temp workers in a risky alternative retirement plan that is subject to market forces, with no guarantee the money will be there when workers retire.

"Temporary workers are the most vulnerable workers in the city system. It's not OK to balance the budget on backs of the poor. The City is going to the absolute weakest link and trying to whittle away at the rights and benefits of a group that has no benefits."  
**Jon Bailiff, Retired Temporary Lifeguard and EMT, City of Santa Cruz**

"We understand these are tough times, but stripping Social Security benefits away from the lowest-paid workers is far too drastic and not the only solution. Social Security must be preserved for our temporary workers, for our community, for our children, and for our future."  
**Doris Henry, City of Santa Cruz Chapter President, SEIU 521**

# SEIU LOCAL 521 BIENNIAL CONVENTION

October 7-9, 2011 — San Jose

*Help set the course to rebuild our middle class!*

What does a member-driven union mean? It means we, the members, help run SEIU Local 521. And every two years, we elect delegates to come together, review our progress and develop our priorities as a Local for the coming years.

For this upcoming convention to be held at the 521 San Jose union office, we need delegates who:

- Are creative thinkers who want to help build our union
- Like to have fun and get to know other member leaders
- Are not afraid to tackle big picture issues, like fighting for a fair economy that works for all middle class families – not just for big corporations and CEOs.

## Open Space Technology at Convention

Become a delegate to the 521 convention and bring your thoughtfulness, ideas and strategic thinking cap. You'll need them!

There will be no planned agenda, no pre-announced workshops, and no panel discussions. Instead, our convention uses Open Space Technology, a fluid, open process of holding a conference in which, based on the stated goals of the gathering, the participants create the agenda and lead the discussions on the topics that most interest them and for which they choose to be responsible. With Open Space, no one is in control. It's chaotic, productive, and fun. And everyone becomes each other's teacher and leader. The result of this process is a Book of Proceedings: a document which compiles all of the information and input from each Open Space Conversation that will guide the work to come.

## Delegate Nominations Open July 25

Nomination forms and rules were sent to members' homes and are available for download at [www.seiu521.org](http://www.seiu521.org). To be a convention delegate or nominate a co-worker, please fill out the nomination form and return by mail, fax, or hand-delivery to your nearest union office.

The delegate nomination and election period runs from July 25 to Aug. 31. Check with your Chapter for specific dates of when nomination forms are due and whether an election will be scheduled.

"This is the time of fighting for a fair economy. Our 521 convention is an exciting opportunity to learn more about our union, network with other members, and help figure out how we can rebuild the middle class."

