



MOVE

Illinois Council 31—American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees—AFL-CIO

“We’re voting union on November 4!”

See pages 8 and 9



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Fighting against the flood

Bruce Rauner wants to swamp public employee unions – let's make sure he doesn't get the chance



BY
ROBERTA LYNCH

**THINK ABOUT
WHAT YOUR
WORKING LIFE
WOULD BE LIKE
WITH NO UNION
CONTRACT...**

When the waters start to rise, do you join the sandbag crews working nonstop to hold them back? Or do you just go on about your business, then struggle desperately to save home and family when the deluge comes?

IF YOU DON'T LIVE ON A FLOOD PLAIN, MAYBE YOU'VE NEVER BEEN FACED WITH THAT DECISION. But the choice facing union members in Illinois right now is just as stark – and as potentially devastating.

As I write, there is exactly one month remaining in the fevered contest for governor of Illinois. Republican candidate Bruce Rauner is a billionaire venture capitalist who's running on pure bile, spewing nonstop venom at public employees and the unions that represent them.

Rauner boasts that he'll "take on" AFSCME, SEIU and the teachers' unions. He says public sector unions have "bribed" politicians to gain "stunningly generous" wages and benefits for public employees and he's vowed to slash pay and eliminate pensions.

He's a big fan of privatization – citing former Indiana governor and big-time privatizer, Mitch Daniels, as his role model – and making some of his own big bucks as the owner of a company that operates private probation services.

More fundamentally, Rauner's made it clear as crystal he doesn't believe unions like ours should be allowed to exist, calling them "corrupt" and "immoral", "by their nature."

For some folks – like those who are always so sure the river won't really overflow its banks – that's just campaign rhetoric, nothing to worry about. But Rauner's record tells a different story. Here's a guy who made his vast fortune by the most cut-throat kind of business practices, resulting in wrongful death lawsuits, federal investigations and criminal charges against various business associates.

He's been involved in more shady deals than our best researchers have been able to count, shipped thousands of jobs overseas, and studied up on governing with Wisconsin's union-busting Scott Walker.

He's on tape vowing that he'll force state employees out on strike – and keep them out until he gets his way. He even claimed he'd follow Reagan's example of firing 12,000 of the nation's air traffic controllers when they went on strike and hiring replacement workers.

If there's anyone who's still sitting back and thinking those waters won't wash over you, I hope you'll think again. Think about what your working life would be like with no union contract, basically with no union. That's where Bruce Rauner wants to go, beyond any doubt. And not just when it comes to state employees, but for every public employee – in cities, counties, universities and school districts across Illinois.

Life without a union? If you've seen the video on our website about what's already happened to our union brothers and sisters in Wisconsin, you have some idea of what will come in the door with Bruce Rauner: "Seniority... means nothing anymore," they told us. "We haven't been able to bargain for wages." "We have no say in working conditions." "Immediately lost about \$5,000 per year."

That's not just Wisconsin state employees; it's city sanitation workers in Milwaukee, teachers in Green Bay, university clerical employees in Madison, and hundreds of thousands more.

Without a union contract,

management sets wages wherever they want them to be, step plans can be wiped out with the stroke of a pen, health care costs can soar almost overnight. Without a union contract, management can discipline, even fire, at will and fear rules in the workplace. Without a union, there are few rules management must abide by – and many arbitrary rules that employees can't contest.

Without a union, there's no way for workers to come together to have a voice on legislation that affects their work, their families and their future. And there's no way to counter the outsized influence of the uber-wealthy who have succeeded in blowing the lid off restrictions on campaign contributions and are prepared to spend millions to blow working people out of the political waters altogether.

Perhaps most importantly, without a union, there's no way to demand the respect and dignity that ought to be the right of every worker – but are too often trampled on by those in power.

We in AFSCME have had more than our share of battles with Governor Pat Quinn over the past four years. But we still have our union – strong and proud as ever. We still have our union contracts, in state government and every other level of government – with our rights intact, even enhanced.

The reality is as plain as a fast-rising river: Every AFSCME member who wants to preserve and defend the right to have a union must help re-elect Pat Quinn. That's the only way to defeat the dangerous current that is Bruce Rauner. If we succeed in that, we'll undoubtedly continue to cross swords with Governor Quinn. But we'll also – without any doubt – continue to have our union contract, our union rights. And we'll have demonstrated – beyond any doubt – our resolve, our unity, and our determination to prevail in whatever battles are to come.

On the Move

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Uncertainty looms over upcoming state contract talks

Of all the questions surrounding negotiations for the next state master contract, one outweighs all others: Who will the union be negotiating with?

IF IT'S GOV. PAT QUINN'S ADMINISTRATION, STATE EMPLOYEES CAN EXPECT A LONG, SOMETIMES DIFFICULT PROCESS – at least if the last contract fight is any guide. Strike preparations were underway across the state when the governor's negotiators finally moved to settle.

But if Bruce Rauner is elected, the fight may take place out on the street instead of at the bargaining table.

On more than one occasion, Rauner has said he will force a strike in order to compel state employees to accept reduced pay and benefits.

"We know we'll have tough negotiations with the Quinn administration," Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch said. "But if Rauner's elected governor, there's a real chance he won't even bother negotiating at all. We've seen nothing to indicate he has respect for the collective bargaining process."

The wide range of possibilities makes it more important than ever that state bargaining team members are prepared.

Gathering ideas

OVER THE SUMMER MONTHS, members of state local unions elected the delegates who will represent them on the bargain-

ing committee – more than 200 in all. Throughout September, Council 31 held orientation sessions for these bargaining committee members at sites throughout the state. The sessions served as a chance to let bargaining team members know what to expect and, perhaps just as importantly, how to keep their members informed throughout the negotiating process.

The orientation sessions made clear that the most important element of achieving a fair contract will be not what happens at the bargaining table, but the ongoing involvement of members back in the locals.

"We learned in the last round of negotiations that members have to be active throughout the bargaining process, including being prepared to strike if it comes to

that," Lynch told the bargaining committee members at the orientation session in Carbondale.

That communication process is a two-way street: Now is the time for state employees to talk to their bargaining representatives about what changes they'd like to see in the next contract.

"We take pride in the fact that the demands we take into negotiations have come from members of locals across the state," Lynch said. "It's the beginning of a constant process of back-and-forth communication to ensure talks reflect the collective will of state employees."

All ideas for the next contract will be considered by the state bargaining committee when it meets in November. Committee members will vote on which ideas should form

the union's initial proposal to the state.

The first meeting with state negotiators will take place on Dec. 10. While this meeting consists largely of an exchange of proposals and little negotiation, it will set the tone and form the basis for future talks.

That's why the run-up to that first meeting – and the involvement of state employees – is critical.

"No matter who is governor, it's important that we go into talks with a clear plan for what we want and a clear strategy," Lynch said. "It's going to be one of the toughest – if not the toughest – bargaining climates we've ever faced. It's absolutely vital that the entire bargaining team is united and shares a common purpose – and that the members are prepared to back them up."

Cook County employees keep up pressure as contract talks continue

Even after two years of frustrating negotiations, Cook County employees remain determined that they will not let management balance the county's budget on their backs.

THE BARGAINING COMMITTEE REPRESENTING 15 AFSCME LOCALS HAS REPEATEDLY TURNED down proposals from County Board President Toni Preckwinkle's administration that would see employees suffer a cut in take-home pay – including a pay freeze for the two years since the old agreement expired.

While management has made some movement recently – particularly after informational pickets in June – they still have yet to put a credible economic package on the table, insisting the bargaining committee agree to increased health insurance costs while refusing to offer fair wage increases.

"Before we can talk about raising medical costs, we need to talk about wages," said Liz Prowell, who represents Local 3696 on the bargaining team. "If we're going to pay all this

money into our insurance but not see a cost of living increase, we're going to be put into the hole. That's not acceptable."

As On the Move went to press, the bargaining committee was preparing for another meeting with county negotiators on Oct. 1. Previous meetings, however, have often seen a lack of commitment from management on moving toward a settlement.

"The county is dragging its feet in negotiations," said bargaining team member Steve Ramsey, an investigator in the public defender's office and president of Local 1767. "Our committee is putting out what really matters to members – proposals on wages and health care. But management's not making any moves that would bring us closer to settling this contract."



Making the call

IN AUGUST, COUNTY EMPLOYEES continued to put pressure on Preckwinkle by calling her office to deliver a clear message: It's not fair to ask us to go two years without a raise and to demand massive increases in health care costs without putting a fair wage proposal on the table.

Preckwinkle definitely heard the message, Council 31 Regional Director Nefertiti Smith said.

"We received a direct request to make it stop," she said. "We didn't agree to that, of course, but it shows that it made an impact. Every action

we take has an impact on the county."

AFSCME members have also become a regular presence at county board meetings as part of an attempt to get board members to urge Preckwinkle to come to an agreement with county workers.

"She's tired of us coming to her board meetings, but we're not going to stop," Smith said.

More action needed

BARGAINING TEAM MEMBERS SAY continued action from county employees will be necessary to show the Preckwinkle adminis-

tration that they need to put a credible proposal on the table.

Generating that action was the key goal of informational meetings held recently at work-sites throughout the county.

"We are telling people they need to be vocal with the president's office," said Local 3315 President Presita West, an attorney in the public defender's office. "We don't have strength if it's just the bargaining team involved. The members need to be engaged and aware of what's going on. We're going to rely on them to back the bargaining committee."

Cook County employees don't need to look far back for evidence they can make a difference. This summer, their action played a key role in preventing Preckwinkle's plan to cut pensions for county employees from making progress in the General Assembly.

"We showed them what the union can do," Ramsey said. "The whole committee was calling Member Action Teams and stewards and we stopped them. We have to keep reminding people that when that AFSCME train is rolling down the tracks, you either have to get on or get out the way."

Fight to save Rock Island Co. nursing home enters home stretch

A year-long effort to prevent the privatization of a nursing home in Rock Island County is entering its final days with an alliance of AFSCME members and county residents working hard to keep the facility in the hands of the public.

SINCE LAST OCTOBER, EMPLOYEES OF HOPE CREEK NURSING HOME, FAMILIES OF RESIDENTS and concerned citizens have rallied against a plan by some county board members to outsource the home to a private vendor.

After persuading board members to vote against an initial proposal last year, the challenge is now to persuade voters to back a referendum that would implement a small tax increase that would go toward the costs of operating Hope Creek.

"It amounts to 13 cents per person a day," Council 31 staff representative Miguel Morga said. "If it passes, then that should put the issue to rest. That'd be interpreted as a message from the communi-

ty that they want to protect the nursing home and support it."

Putting people over profits

CHRIS BAKER'S FATHER IS A RESIDENT at Hope Creek. Like many, she fears that putting a for-profit company in charge of the home would result in the bottom line taking priority over caring for elderly people, many of whom have serious health issues and have their costs covered by Medicaid.

"In my opinion, when you privatize the facility, the care deteriorates," she said. "I feel privately-run homes have a worse staff-to-patient ratio, which decreases the quality of care. Any day they could say they're choosing to no longer have Medicaid patients at their facility, and then you have to leave."

Baker is the president of the KISS – Keep It Supported for Seniors – committee that is working with AFSCME Local 2371 to ensure the referendum passes. The organization has been aggressive, holding bake sales, poker nights and trivia contests to raise money for an effort that includes billboards, door hangers, phone banks and door-to-door outreach.

Local 2371 President Shelley Close said Hope



A volunteer places a lawn sign urging Rock Island County voters to support a referendum that would provide funding for the Hope Creek Nursing Home.

Creek's employees have a level of experience that isn't often seen at privately-run facilities.

"We have a lot of long-term employees who have been doing this for many, many years," Close said. "Privatization is about money. Under a private company, eventually they'd cut back to the minimum on staffing."

No time to be complacent

THERE ARE REASONS TO BE OPTI-

mistic that the referendum will pass. While dozens of people are working in support of it, no organized opposition has emerged. Plus, history is on the side of those fighting to keep Hope Creek under public control.

However, no one is acting as though victory is assured.

"Rock Island County has passed referendums in the past for the nursing home and we've gotten around 60 percent," Close said. "But we're not taking anything for

granted. We're walking every Saturday door to door and making phone calls Monday through Thursday night."

With so much on the line – quality of care for the elderly, good jobs and a source of pride for the community – the effort to keep Hope Creek in the public's hands will continue into the evening of November 4.

"I'll work up until the polls close," Baker said. "Losing isn't an option at this point."

Appellate court upholds arbitrator: Back wages for state workers must be paid

In a sweet victory for AFSCME members, a panel of Illinois Appellate Court judges ruled Sept. 30 that thousands of frontline state employees must be paid wages owed from the previous union contract – even if the General Assembly fails to make an appropriation.

THE RULING BRINGS EMPLOYEES IN FIVE DEPARTMENTS – HUMAN SERVICES, CORRECTIONS, JUVENILE Justice, Natural Resources and Public Health – one crucial step closer to being made whole three years after the Quinn administration first announced that it

would not implement wage increases called for in fiscal 2011 and 2012 by the previous contract.

"This decision is a win for working men and women who serve all the people of Illinois, caring for the disabled, keeping prisons secure, maintain-

ing our state parks and much more," Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch said. "Moreover it's a victory for a principle of simple fairness for all workers: A contract is a contract, it means what it says, and no employer – not state government or anyone else – can unilaterally withhold wages owed."

In the courts and the Capitol

SINCE 2011, THE UNION HAS pursued a two-pronged approach to ensure that wages were paid: fighting in the courts and determined lobbying in the General

"It's a victory for a principle of simple fairness for all workers: A contract is a contract."
— Roberta Lynch

Assembly. Both approaches have paid off.

AFSCME first took the matter to an arbitrator, who agreed that the wages must be paid. The state appealed that decision to circuit court. While the court agreed with

the union's position that the money was owed pursuant to the union contract, it left open the question of whether payment required an appropriation.

Last year the Quinn administration agreed to support payment of back wages as a condition of the current state contract and employees in a number of agencies were paid monies owed out of the lapsed funds in their agency's budget. However, DOC, DPH, DJJ, DNR and DHS lacked sufficient lapsed funds and required a special appropriation by the General Assembly.

Continued on page 15

Staffing, safety concerns continue at state prisons



Department of Corrections employees are keeping a close eye on staffing and procedural changes that are beginning to ripple throughout the state's prison system.

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SO-CALLED RASHO SETTLEMENT, which requires IDOC facilities to boost staffing levels and change procedures for dealing with inmates who have a mental illness. The requirements, mandated by the federal government, stem from a class action lawsuit the department settled out of court.

The changes required by Rasho – still being formulated as *On the Move* went to press – will fall largely on three correctional centers: Pontiac, Dixon and Logan. The union is ensuring that employees there have a say in implementation.

"The department is establishing policies and procedures and we are asserting a place at

the table to determine what those changes are," Council 31 regional director Eddie Caumiant said. "No one really knows what the final outcome will be. They haven't finished the planning."

One change that is all but certain is a need for more staff, including correctional officers, as well as mental health counselors who would be employed by Wexford, a vendor that provides mental health services throughout IDOC.

While the increased staffing is generally welcome, there are serious concerns about how quickly those employees will be hired, how they'll be allocated and, in the case of Wexford employees, how much office space they'll need.

"It's basically going to turn us upside down. They're calling for 200 correctional officers and another 200 mental health staff," said Rick Ruthart, president of Local 817 and a correctional officer at Dixon CC. "We're bringing in officers, but we're not bringing them in fast enough. The court's given us until January 1, but there's no way in three months we can hire that many staff."

Frank Turner, president of

Local 494 (Pontiac CC), said he's concerned current CO's will suffer long hours if IDOC isn't quick enough in hiring more employees.

"It's a struggle for them to keep up now and the levels are going to be even higher," he said. "It's going to be a challenge getting the staff in here to alleviate the mandatory overtime and complete everything that's going to be required."

Impact on safety

PONTIAC, DIXON AND LOGAN will all become the primary destination for inmates designated as "Significantly Mentally Ill" (SMI). Ensuring the safety of personnel assigned to these inmates is a top priority for the union.

Adequate staffing is only one element of ensuring a safe work environment, however. The Rasho settlement also changes the procedure for how SMI inmates are handled if they violate rules. Previously, inmates committing violations would be ticketed and disciplined by a committee. SMI inmates, however, will be required to undergo a mental health screening before any discipline is meted out.

The overriding concern is that dangerous inmates may receive a lesser punishment, leaving staff more exposed.

"Basically now, anytime an inmate offends in the system, if they're an SMI inmate, a ticket will be written but it'll be reviewed by a mental health official," Caumiant said. "What our folks want and have always wanted is if someone acts up, they get written up and they do some time."

Under the terms of the settlement, inmates with mental illnesses will also be guaranteed more time out of their holding cell, adding another element of risk for correctional officers.

However, the union has taken action to ensure assaults on staff members will not be tolerated.

"One thing we've already insisted upon is that no matter what, if an inmate assaults an officer, that inmate should be charged," Caumiant said. "We've received assurance from DOC on this."

New committee shaking things up

THE RASHO SETTLEMENT IS being implemented at a critical time for the correctional sys-

tem, which continues to struggle with severe overcrowding and many outdated or irrational policies.

These system-wide concerns – along with issues at specific facilities – are the focus of the Joint Safety and Security Committee, a group comprised of union representatives and management that is in the process of visiting every DOC facility in the state.

The process has been going on for nearly a year and has already resulted in improvements at several prisons.

"In each place we've been, we've done pretty well in terms of improving the physical plant and people being hired," Caumiant said. "In Vandalia we got several new sergeants. At Centralia, they got several new positions. They're hiring 47 new staff at Logan. There's been some real tangible numbers on the staffing front."

The committee's work is only halfway done, but the changes made so far are encouraging going forward, Caumiant said.

"We wanted to dig in and make some tangible changes," he said. "The reaction we've gotten from members has been overwhelmingly positive so far."

PEOPLE delegates: Support Quinn to defeat Rauner

When some 500 delegates and guests to the AFSCME PEOPLE Political Conference met in September, one issue loomed above all others: the union's position on the race for governor.

THE OPTIONS WERE TO SUPPORT NO CANDIDATE OR TO BACK GOV. PAT QUINN, WITH WHOM AFSCME members had sparred multiple times during the previous three years.

In the end, the threat presented by Republican nominee Bruce Rauner – who, unlike Quinn, opposes the right of public employees to collectively bargain and rejects the idea of raising revenue to fund public services – convinced a large majority of the delegates of the need to support the incumbent.

After hearing arguments on both sides of the issue, conference delegates adopted a resolution outlining the dangers that Rauner poses to working families in Illinois and recommending support for Quinn in order to defeat the billionaire Republican candidate.

"The serious differences that AFSCME has had with Governor Quinn over the past four years cannot stand as a barrier

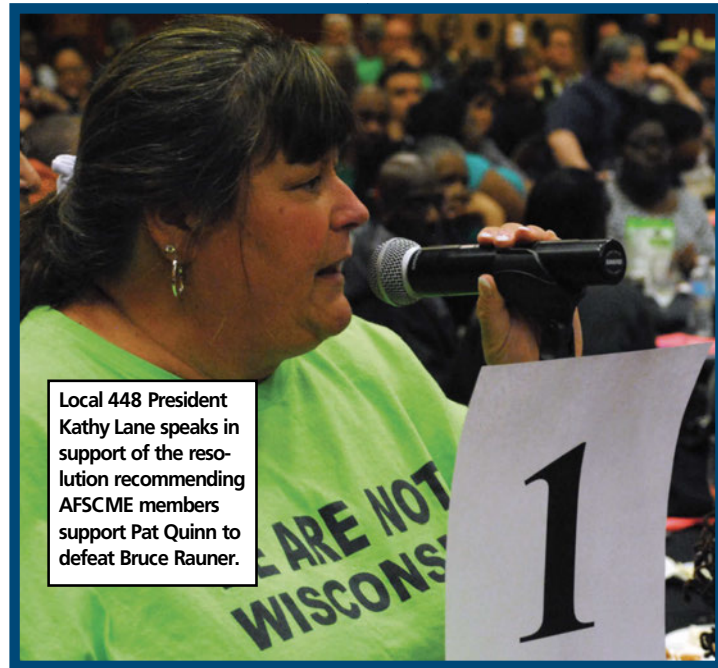
to taking the necessary actions to defeat Bruce Rauner," the resolution declared.

Speakers against the resolution agreed that Rauner posed a dire threat, but said they thought the union should try to work against him without recommending a vote for Quinn.

Delegates in support of the resolution acknowledged the strong disagreements the union has had with Quinn, but noted that with Rauner, the union's very existence would be put at risk – meaning AFSCME members could not afford to stay home on Nov. 4 or skip the governor's race when voting.

"You can't beat someone with no one," said Local 943 President Randy Hellman. "Whatever you may think about the strengths and weaknesses of Pat Quinn, Bruce Rauner is the biggest threat we've ever faced."

Countering Rauner's campaign – one fueled by multimillion-dollar donations from the



Local 448 President Kathy Lane speaks in support of the resolution recommending AFSCME members support Pat Quinn to defeat Bruce Rauner.

wealthy elite and more than \$12 million of Rauner's own fortune – will require more than just casting a ballot, though. Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch stressed that all delegates should be hitting the streets every Saturday until Election Day and should recruit their fellow union members to join them.

"This is going to be a phenomenally close election," Lynch said. "The difference will be getting boots on the ground and getting the word out to our friends and

neighbors. We are going to need every possible vote at the polls to defeat Bruce Rauner."

Illinois AFL-CIO President Michael Carrigan told delegates that defeating Rauner would involve the entire Illinois labor movement and acknowledged AFSCME's leading role.

"If we get our people out to vote, we'll win. No amount of money could beat us," he said. "We don't want to be like Wisconsin, Indiana or Michigan. We want to be a proud example of what happens when organized labor

works together."

Up and down the ballot

THE PRESIDENTS AND PEOPLE chairs of each local were eligible to serve as delegates at the conference, held on Sept. 13 in Peoria. Delegates voted on recommendations made by the PEOPLE Executive Committee in races for the state's constitutional offices, as well as contests for U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

Endorsements in state legislative races were approved separately by the PEOPLE Executive Committee, based on recommendations made by committees in the 11 different regions that evaluate candidates through interviews or questionnaires.

In other races, conference delegates recommended support for U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, Secretary of State Jesse White, Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka and Mike Frerichs, a state senator running for Treasurer. Delegates also recommended support for several U.S. House candidates, including Ann Callis, who is challenging incumbent Rep. Rodney Davis in the 13th Congressional District.

While the decisions made at the conference are important, they are only the beginning of a longer process that will unfold in communities across Illinois, Council 31 Deputy Director Mike Newman told delegates.

"We can't leave feeling like we've taken care of business," he said. "The test will be how well we get our message out to our fellow members, their friends, their families and other voters."

2014 AFSCME General Election recommendations

Governor/Lt. Governor
Pat Quinn/Paul Vallas (D)

Secretary of State
Jesse White (D)

Comptroller
Judy Baar Topinka (R)

Treasurer
Mike Frerichs (D)

U.S. CONGRESS

Senate
Dick Durbin (D)

CD 1
Bobby Rush (D)

CD 2
Robin Kelly (D)

CD 3
Daniel Lipinski (D)

CD 4
Luis Gutierrez (D)

CD 5
Mike Quigley (D)

CD 7
Danny Davis (D)

CD 8
Tammy Duckworth (D)

CD 9
Jan Schakowsky (D)

CD 10
Brad Schneider (D)

CD 11
Bill Foster (D)

CD 12
Bill Enyart (D)

CD 13
Ann Callis (D)

CD 17
Cheri Bustos (D)

ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Senate 6
John Cullerton (D)

Senate 18
Bill Cunningham (D)

Senate 30
Terry Link (D)

Senate 48
Andy Manar (D)

Senate 57
James Clayborne (D)

House 5
Ken Dunkin (D)

House 10
Pamela Reaves Harris (D)

House 14
Kelly Cassidy (D)

House 34
Elgie Sims (D)

House 38
Al Riley (D)

House 43
Anna Moeller (D)

House 60
Rita Mayfield (D)

House 61
Loren Karner (D)

House 71
Mike Smiddy (D)

House 76
Frank Mautino (D)

House 79
Kate Cloonen (D)

House 91
Michael Unes (R)

House 96
Sue Scherer (D)

House 97
Moiria Dunn (D)

House 100
CD Davidsmeyer (R)

House 102
Adam Brown (R)

House 103
Carol Ammons (D)

House 107
John Cavaletto (R)

House 112
Cullen Cullen (D)

House 113
Jay Hoffman (D)

House 115
Bill Kilquist (D)

House 118
Brandon Phelps (D)

STATEWIDE BALLOT QUESTIONS

Advisory referendum: Raise the minimum wage to \$10/hour – YES

Advisory referendum: Tax millionaires to fund education – YES

Constitutional amendment: Expand rights of crime victims – YES

Constitutional amendment: Strengthen voting rights – YES

Advisory referendum: Require insurance to cover birth control – YES

COUNTY AND LOCAL RACES

Champaign County Board District 4 – Jim McGuire (R)

District 6 – Patti Petrie (D)

District 7 – Pius Weibel (D)

District 9 – Shana Jo Harrison (D)

Champaign County Clerk Gordy Hulten (R)

Cook County Board District 9 – Peter Silvestri (R)

Grundy County Sheriff Ken Briley (R)

Joliet School Board Don Dickinson (D)

Kane County Board District 3 – Don Ishmael (D)

Kankakee County Board District 4 – Sam Payton (D)

District 8 – Ray Chamberlain (D)

Lake County Sheriff Jason Patt (D)

LaSalle County Sheriff Tom Templeton (R)

Madison County Treasurer Marleen Suarez (D)

Madison County Clerk Debbie Ming Mendoza (D)

Monroe County Sheriff Kevin Hirsch (I)

Rock Island County Board District 12 – David Adams (D)

District 18 – Brian Flaherty (D)

District 23 – Ken "Moose" Maranda (D)

Will County Sheriff Mike Kelley (D)

Will County Board District 5 – Reed Bible (D)

District 9 – Lauren Staley-Ferry (D)

Winnebago County Sheriff Robert "Bob" Springer (D)

Winnebago County Clerk Margie Mullins (D)

Winnebago County Board District 8 – Eli Nicolosi (R)

District 3 – John Gedney (D)

District 15 – Bert Gerl (D)

Joliet Park District referendum – YES

Rock Island County nursing home referendum – FOR

Cook County law enforcement: AFSCME members to the rescue

This August, the city of Harvey became the site of a hostage drama that saw six children and two women held captive inside a house.

THROUGHOUT 21 TENSE HOURS, MEMBERS OF THE COOK COUNTY SHERIFF'S POLICE WERE ON hand, maintaining calm on the outside, negotiating the release of four children and, in the end, storming the home in a raid that saw all remaining hostages brought to safety – and the two men holding them captive put under arrest.

The sheriff's police officers and sergeants on the scene that day are all AFSCME members. So, too, are the correctional sergeants and lieutenants now keeping the accused hostage-takers in custody until justice can be served.

Dominic Boja, a 26-year veteran of the sheriff's police, was one of the negotiators on site during the Harvey incident. He said the primary goals in negotiating a hostage crisis are to ensure the safety of all involved and to keep the situation from spiraling out of control.

"We try to get everyone out safely and try to see if there's anything we can do to move the situation along," he said. "In Harvey, we were able to get four of the children out by negotiation and we were able to keep everyone in a certain part of the house until we came in. We want to make sure our officers are safe, the hostages are safe and even the offenders so they can face justice."

Hostage negotiation is



Sgt. Anthony Rushing (left) and Lt. Angela Lewis help maintain order at the Cook County Jail.

only one part of Boja's job. Most of the time, he's an investigator with the special operations unit, which focuses on a variety of crimes ranging from counterfeit goods to human trafficking.

"You're doing many different things," said Boja, a member of AFSCME Local 2264. "You have to figure out how to work a lot of different cases."

A big responsibility

THE COOK COUNTY SHERIFF'S police is often the primary law enforcement agency for the 2.5 million county residents who live outside the city of Chicago. Some suburban cities and villages have no police force, and those that do often lack specialized investigative and tactical units that the sheriff's police can provide. The county's unin-

corporated areas also fall under the jurisdiction of the sheriff's office.

"We're the third largest police department in Illinois after Chicago and the state police. We're the second largest sheriff's office in America," said police Sgt. Andy Douvris, president of Local 3958. "Our detectives work all seven days and we have people on all shifts. On a daily basis, we deploy 69 beat cars that patrol everything from the Lake County border down to Indiana."

While police sergeants in Cook County oversee some units, they're also expected to be out on patrol, Douvris said.

"The sergeants here have a lot more responsibility than those in other agencies," he said. "The sergeants are out there on the streets with their guys on patrol."

Those patrols can often bring surprises, said William Delafuente, a member of Local 2264 who works as an investigator in the gang narcotics unit.

"You could be interfering in a drug deal, or you could be in a situation where gangs are feuding. There are foot-chases," he said. "I'm still surprised by some of the

things that I see in my everyday line of work. You'll never know enough – I'm always learning from other officers."

On guard

WHERE THE WORK OF THE SHERIFF'S police ends, the county's correctional sergeants and lieutenants take over.

The county jail sees a constant stream of inmates going in and out, including those who have been recently arrested, are on trial or are being transferred to a state prison after being convicted. While some detainees are calm, others have behavioral issues or mental illnesses that can spark dangerous situations.

Correctional Lieutenant Angela Lewis, a member of Local 2226, has seen a jail cafeteria go from calm to chaotic within moments. She once saw a woman eat glass to force a move to another housing unit.

"You always have to be conscious of your space and what you're doing and how you're dealing with people," she said.

Correctional Sergeant Anthony Rushing, a member of Local 3692, said that while his job may not put him in contact with the general public, he and other county correctional employees are still performing a vital public service by ensuring the jail operates smoothly.

"I think the public is

counting on us working in the jail just as much as they count on the police riding in the squad cars," he said. "We have an important role to play in keeping the public safe."

Union pride

SHERIFF'S POLICE AND CORRECTIONAL employees are covered under the same collective bargaining agreement as other Cook County employees represented by AFSCME. And, like many of their union brothers and sisters, they feel the county hasn't given them the respect they're due.

"I don't feel like they value our department and what we have to offer," Delafuente said. "It does so much for the county's image, but it's overlooked by the county government."

Being part of the AFSCME family, however, has ensured that their work allows them to support themselves and their families. Even though patrolling streets and jail corridors can be dangerous, many sheriff's police and correctional workers have held their jobs for decades.

"My initial plan when I started was to do five years," said Lewis, who has two children – one serving in the Navy and the other attending college. "The five years turned into eight and then 10. You find out how good this job can be for you. If it wasn't for the job here I wouldn't have the life I have now."



Dominic Boja, an investigator with the Cook County's Sheriff's police, also works as a hostage negotiator.



UNION DEFENSE TE STOP R

Bruce Rauner has millions of dollars and a record that AFSCME members are fighting back the loss of jobs. Rauner's disastrous agenda for Illinois.

On nearly every Saturday since Labor Day, the union has organized walks in critical areas throughout the state: Springfield, Chicago, the Quad Cities, Rockford, Peoria, Marion, Metro East and more.

"Bruce Rauner represents an unprecedented threat to public employees in Illinois, and that demanded an unprecedented response," Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch said. "AFSCME members across the state have answered the call to reach out in their community and tell the truth about Rauner's record."

The Republican nominee's anti-union crusade has given AFSCME members plenty of reason to spread the word.

"He wants to take away all our rights so we couldn't even bargain on wages or health care," Local 1805 member Tad Hawk said. "We've committed our lives to these jobs and benefits promised. He wants to take that away from us and it's not right."

Rauner's history as a "vulture capitalist" is also a powerful motivator. "Rauner was a businessman who bought companies, tore them up, sold off pieces and ran them as cheaply as possible," said Ryan Eads, a member of Local 501 and a correctional officer at Lincoln CC. "That isn't going to help Illinois. It's not going to bring money to Illinois."

For Local 2600's Sara Pickett, concerns about Rauner are deeply personal.

"I'm fearful of the election if he were to win and the negative impact upon me and my family," she said. "I can't take a pay reduction. I can't have my benefits reduced. I want a union looking out for me."

Several AFSCME members told On the Move that Rauner's admiration of Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker – and a desire to prevent Illinois

from going down that same path.

"He'd act just like Scott Walker," said Lorraine Swanigan, a union member. "He'd sit with us at the bargaining table and let us go out on strike during the negotiations."

Others look at Rauner and see a threat to the future of working families.

"I think that a billionaire is too big for Illinois voters and anyone who has to work for a living," said Delaney, a member of Local 31 at the Sonville CC. "He'd be a governor who would be a governor."

A new experience

The threat of Rauner has motivated many who previously participated in neighborhood meetings. While knocking on the doors of neighbors, intimidating, first-timers are saying they were expecting – and rewarding – a more aggressive approach.

"I'm not a very outgoing person, but my benefits reduced than I am going and I'm not going to let that happen."

Eads said there was too much fear. "There's a bit of apprehension in the families so you've got to shake it up."

At each canvassing location, the union members were



AM HITS STREETS TO RAUNER

to spend blanketing the state's airwaves with ads, but
best way they can – telling voters face-to-face about

ath – was a primary motivation.
alker did in Wisconsin,” said Local 2081
DCFS office specialist. “I don’t even think
ng table. He said Gov. Quinn should have
ne last state contract talks. He wouldn’t
see a man unable to relate to the needs
totally out of touch with all of the needs of
work to make ends meet,” said Jennifer
549 and a correctional officer at Jack-
hor for more people like him.”

ivated many AFSCME members who hadn’t
ighborhood walks.
of strangers to discuss politics can sound
g the work was more enjoyable than they
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son, but I’m more fearful of having my bene-
l knocking on people’s doors,” Pickett said.
ch on the line to let nerves get in the way.
n but the bottom line is it comes down to our
everything off and just do it,” he said.
AFSCME staff work to pair first-timers with

people who have walked before. Oftentimes, pairs will begin knocking doors
together until both feel comfortable talking to voters by themselves.

“I’ve gone out with someone who hadn’t done it before. I took the
lead and showed them how it’s done,” said Local 997’s Kurt Engle-
brecht, a tax auditor in the Department of Revenue. “Don’t be afraid.
You’re not going to be by yourself and you’ll be shown how to do it. The
people we’re talking to have been fairly receptive and positive toward
our message.”

Still time to make a difference

The union will be holding walks every Saturday in October, as well as
on November 1. Volunteers will also be needed for Election Day itself
to get out the vote and make sure those who need assistance getting to
the polls receive the help they need.

“We almost beat Rauner in the primary because we got our voters to
cross over at the last moment,” said Dean Mouloupoulos, a DCFS case-
worker in Local 2854. “We can get this guy. We’ve just got to turn out
the vote.”

And, as voters become numb to a growing number of TV ads, per-
sonal contact can make a lasting difference.

“We have come across people who are undecided and skeptical of
the TV commercials from both sides,” Englebrecht said. “That one-on-
one contact can really make a difference. You’re putting a human face
on the campaign. You can answer questions and give them a new per-
spective they haven’t had before.”

Bruce Rauner: Bad for public employees, bad for unions, bad for Illinois



When billionaire Bruce Rauner began his run for Illinois governor, it was obvious he posed a grave threat to public employees and their unions.

NOW, AFTER MONTHS OF SCRUTINY FROM VOTERS, THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND THE MEDIA, IT'S clear that Rauner's agenda would be disastrous for not only public employees, but all of Illinois – particularly the middle class.

"Whether you're looking at his attacks on public employees and their unions, his long history of shady busi-

ness deals or the campaign he's run, it's easy to see how terrible Bruce Rauner would be for Illinois," Council 31 Political Director John Cameron said.

What is Bruce Rauner's plan for Illinois? Based on his record, words and proposals, it would include:

- Greatly weakening the collective bargaining power of public employee unions;
- Lower pay and benefits for public employees;
- Gutting the political power of public employees and their unions;
- Elimination of defined-benefit pensions for public employees;
- A cut in the minimum wage;
- Enormous cuts to public services and greatly expanded privatization; and
- Reduced funding for public schools while favoring corporate-run charter schools.

"Rauner's campaign has been bankrolled by millions from his own pocket and millions more from his rich friends," Cameron said. "This would be government of the wealthy, for the wealthy, by the wealthy."

An enemy of collective bargaining

RAUNER'S HOSTILITY TOWARD AFSCME and other public employee unions is on the record time and again. He's on tape comparing them to cancer.

"We have a financial tumor growing in the United States created by the public sector unions... for excessive compensation, both current pay and retirement pay," Rauner said in 2011.

He's boasted that he would literally shut down the state in order to extract concessions on pay and benefits from state workers, comparing his plan to President Reagan, who fired 12,000 striking air traffic controllers in the 1980s to break their union.

"We may have to do what Ronald Reagan did with the air traffic controllers," Rauner said in March. "Sort of have to do a do-over and shut things down for a little while. That's what we're gonna do."

Weakening economic security

A MAJOR PLANK OF RAUNER'S

agenda is to end defined-benefit pensions for public employees, replacing them with 401(k)-style plans.

His plan would worsen the pension debt the state already faces and it would also be the height of hypocrisy: Rauner made a large chunk of his fortune managing the assets of public employee pension funds.

Rauner constantly repeats the canard that pension benefits are "stunningly generous" – part of his efforts to foment hostility toward public employees.

"Why should government workers get a pension that makes them millionaires when they retire?" Rauner said in June 2013. "Someone's gotta take 'em on."

Rauner also wants to make life worse for those already struggling to get by. He's called for lowering the minimum wage in Illinois by \$1 an hour – only backtracking after his remarks received attention from the media. Early this year, he even admitted he'd support eliminating the minimum wage entirely.

"I have said, on a number of occasions, that we could

have a lower minimum wage or no minimum wage as part of increasing Illinois' competitiveness," he said in a January 2014 radio interview.

Corrupt crony capitalism

RAUNER'S PRIVATE EQUITY FIRM, through its control of Trans Healthcare (THI), owned more than 200 nursing homes. As it tried to squeeze every dollar out of them by cutting staff and operating costs, elderly nursing home residents paid with their lives. Courts have held THI liable, awarding the relatives of those who died more than \$1 billion.

Rauner has been repeatedly questioned by the media about his role in running THI and he refuses to provide a straight answer every time the topic comes up.

"Bruce Rauner doesn't believe he's accountable to anyone, and he won't believe he's accountable to the people of Illinois," Cameron said. "He believes that he and people like him can do whatever they want and have

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November ballot holds key legislative contests, ballot questions

While the race for governor is clearly the top priority for AFSCME members on Nov. 4, other contests further down the ballot are also worth members' attention.

SEVERAL LAWMAKERS WHO HAVE BEEN STRONG DEFENDERS OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES – PARTICULARLY their pensions – face stiff challenges this fall and will need the help of union members to cross the finish line.

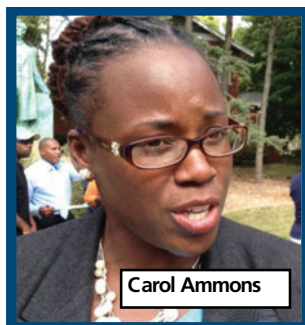
"We don't have many reliable allies in the legislature, so it's vitally important that we work on behalf of the ones

who have stood with us through so many battles," said Joanna Webb-Gauvin, Council 31's legislative director.

One of the lawmakers who will need the union's help to win is an AFSCME member himself. Democratic Rep. Mike Smiddy is fighting to hold on to his seat in the 71st District around Moline.

Smiddy, who worked at East Moline CC before being elected to the General Assembly, has a 100-percent voting record on issues important to AFSCME members. His opponent is Republican Jim Wozniak, who has called for moving state employees off defined benefit pensions and into a 401(k)-style plan.

In Kankakee, Democratic State Rep. Kate Cloonen is locked in a close race with her



Carol Ammons

opponent from 2012, Republican Glenn Nixon.

"Kate Cloonen took a political risk by refusing to vote for pension cuts for state employees," Webb-Gauvin said. "We need to respond by standing with her on Election Day."

There are also two competitive open-seat races with candidates backed by AFSCME.

Democrat Carol Ammons



Mike Smiddy

is running for the open seat in the 103rd District based around Champaign-Urbana. A member of the Urbana City Council, Ammons is on the record supporting efforts to have pension cuts overturned and is also a defender of collective bargaining rights for public employees.

Bill Kilquist, a Democrat, is running for the open seat in southern Illinois' sprawling 115th District, which includes

most of Carbondale. A former warden at the now-closed IYC-Murphysboro, Kilquist has strongly defended public facilities.

"On the rare occasions that seats open up, it's important that we work to have pro-union candidates fill them," Webb-Gauvin said.

Key questions

TWO STATEWIDE BALLOT QUESTIONS should be of interest to AFSCME members.

The first is an advisory referendum that asks whether the state should raise the minimum wage to \$10 an hour. The second, another advisory referendum, asks if millionaires should be required to pay an additional 3 percent tax on their income, with the revenue going toward schools.

While both measures are non-binding, a strong show of support could give both issues momentum in the General Assembly, Webb-Gauvin said.

"If large majorities of voters show they're in favor of a higher minimum wage and making the wealthy pay their fair share, politicians will see they have little to fear in making those ideas a reality," she said.

Rock River Academy employees overcome fierce anti-union campaign

The newest members of AFSCME are living proof that workers who want to organize can prevail against any opposition – even a Fortune 500 corporation – if they have the will to win.

EMPLOYEES OF ROCK RIVER ACADEMY, A RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY AND SCHOOL FOR TROUBLED adolescent girls in Rockford, had been dealing with multiple issues at the workplace before they decided to organize with AFSCME.

Violent incidents and injuries were common. Management had little regard for its employees, giving them no say in resident care and often making

unreasonable demands.

Even when speaking up on behalf of the girls they helped, employees found management turning a deaf ear.

“We didn’t have a lot of interaction with management,” said Maurice Foreman, a behavioral health technician. “We’d be trying to give them some input on how to make the place better and they weren’t interested.”

Antoinette Moore, another behavioral health technician, said favoritism was rampant and policies were changed without notification.

“If you were friends with the right person it was easier for you to get promoted,” she said. “They’d rewrite parts of the employee handbook just because that’s what they wanted to do.”

Organizing battle

EMPLOYEES WERE ALREADY FED UP by the time they heard about

the successful organizing efforts at Milestone and Mosaic, two nearby community disability services agencies.

It didn’t take long for the organizing effort to take root.

“We got tired of seeing good people fired and walked out of the building for nothing,” Foreman said. “No one had our backs. Management wouldn’t listen to us and we were losing good staff and we decided to take a stand.”

The employer, however, had no interest in a union, launching one of the most relentless anti-union efforts AFSCME organizers had seen. Rock River’s parent company, Universal Health Services (UHS), is a Fortune 500 corporation deeply opposed to its employees having a voice.

“UHS comes in and hires two super-shady union busters who wouldn’t even give their last names to employees,” Council 31 Organizing Director Doug Woodson said. “They

took over two classrooms and turned it into their war room.”

Management took retribution on those trying to organize, firing four union activists. Employees were forced into “captive audience” meetings that known union supporters weren’t allowed to attend. The union busters even posted flyers referring to some pro-union employees as “The Three Stooges.”

“It was a nasty, even personal at times, anti-union campaign,” Woodson said. “One new employee spoke up in support of the union and was fired a week later. She was one of four pro-union employees to be fired during the organizing campaign.”

While cracking down on the organizing effort, management also attempted to persuade employees that positive changes would be made if they rejected the union.

“This has been going on for years,” said April Baker, a

behavioral health technician.

“If they wanted to make a change they would have done it already.”

On the day of the election, management made one last attempt to rig the election by telling every known “yes” vote not to report to work. But that wasn’t enough to prevent pro-union employees from winning a narrow victory.

“The group was remarkably cohesive,” Woodson said. “They held each other up really well.”

Rock River’s management is still trying to deny the union by filing legal challenges. Employees are confident, though, that they’ll prevail and finally have a chance to make needed changes.

“They’re still firing people that are union but we’re going to fight to get them back,” Foreman said. “I think it’s going to be a better work environment. We’ll come to work with a smile after frowning for six years.”

Chicago cabdrivers building power and getting results

In only a few months, Chicago cabdrivers have gone from a disparate group with no voice in dealing with the city to an energized movement that is standing together and winning major changes.

DRIVERS ARE ADDRESSING YEARS OF MOUNTING FRUSTRATION WITH THE CITY THROUGH CAB Drivers United, an organization backed by AFSCME that already has signed up 3,000 drivers.

In September, drivers representing the group held a meeting with the head of the city’s Department of Consumer Affairs & Business Protection. They were able to walk away from the meeting with promises of upcoming changes, including a cut in the transaction fee drivers must pay when cus-

tomers use a credit card, as well as a reduction of leasing fees most drivers pay to cab associations.

Those costs are among several that have risen significantly in the last few years, making it difficult for drivers to earn a living.

“For the first time in the history of Chicago cab drivers, we have a united voice and the effect is the changes we are seeing now,” said David Adenekan. “We are well-organized, professional and able to articulate our concerns in a way where the city has to listen to us.”

The meeting also resulted in a pledge to set up a standing committee focused on the concerns of cabdrivers and the guarantee of a follow-up meeting to ensure promises already made are kept.

Making such dramatic progress less than a year after



Chicago cab driver Cheryl Miller speaks at a rally for drivers in September.

forming their organizing committee has been a big morale boost for union activists. But there’s still much more to be done. Drivers also want a share of the revenues brought in by display ads that are on top of their cabs. Currently, drivers essentially work as mobile billboard drivers yet receive no compensation.

Drivers are also seeking stricter regulation of rideshare companies like Uber and Lyft. A city ordinance regulating such companies does little to address an uneven playing field

in which cabdrivers have to comply with numerous costly regulations that don’t apply to rideshare companies and drivers.

Cab Drivers United is up for the challenge.

“We’ve been talking to the aldermen,” Adenekan said. “With Cab Drivers United, we’re part of the process now.”

Stopping the “kangaroo court”

ANOTHER TOP CONCERN FOR drivers is the city’s unfair system for ticketing and disciplining drivers. Hearings held at 400 W. Superior don’t give drivers the chance to face their accuser when they’re the target of a consumer complaint.

“I know one driver who had a complaint filed against

him that described him as an old, fat, bald man with a beard and he’s none of those things,” said Cheryl Miller, who has driven a cab in the city for 15 years.

The collective outrage about this process – one many drivers characterize as a kangaroo court – caused 400 drivers to gather for a picket at 400 W. Superior in early September. Joining them were dozens of drivers who circled the block, honking their horns.

Dimeji Oladapo, one of the drivers who attended the protest, said that if drivers don’t quickly pay a fine, the city will try to wear them down by delaying and rescheduling hearings, forcing drivers to give up time they could spend collecting fares.

“When you go there, they just want to make a deal,” he said. “One time I decided to not make a deal and said I wanted to go before the judge. They kept postponing and postponing. Eventually I said I didn’t want to keep coming there anymore and I took the deal. The more time I spend there is money out of my pocket.”

But Oladapo – and other drivers – now feel like those days are about to end, thanks to Cab Drivers United.

“I believe that if we have a union, it’s going to be like making a u-turn,” he said. “They know if I have the backing of a union, they won’t be able to force these bad deals on us anymore.”

Maryville employees build union amid contract talks, sale of hospital

The past year has been an eventful one for the employees of Maryville Academy, a residential program for troubled youth.

AFTER VOTING TO ORGANIZE WITH AFSCME, EMPLOYEES ELECTED A BARGAINING COMMITTEE, WHICH GOT TO WORK ON NEGOTIATING AN INAUGURAL CONTRACT. AWAY FROM THE TABLE, THE BARGAINING TEAM WORKED TO EDUCATE EMPLOYEES AND MANAGEMENT ABOUT THE NEW REALITY OF HAVING A UNION.

As if that wasn't enough of a challenge, Maryville announced in March that it would be closing its behavioral health hospital. Not long after, a private firm, US HealthVest, announced it was interested in purchasing the 150-bed facility in Des Plaines.

The looming sale has added a bit of unpredictability to a bargaining process that has been making slow but

steady progress, particularly because Maryville is expected to get about \$23 million for the hospital.

"Before, management was claiming it didn't have a lot of money, but we're not sure they can get away with saying that anymore," said Fred Montag, a member of the bargaining team.

Another issue is protecting the jobs and union rights of the employees who work at the hospital. "They're happy with the union because we were able to address a lot of problems there," Montag said.

The sale has also preoccupied management, leading to some slowdowns in negotiations.

"We're kind of in limbo right now," said bargaining team member Mike McNutt.

Building a strong union

MARYVILLE ACADEMY EMPLOYEES care for children and teenagers with behavioral issues. Many of the youth have anger management issues that can put employees at risk for

verbal and physical attacks.

Before organizing with AFSCME, employees felt management wasn't adequately concerned about their welfare and wasn't giving them enough input in developing programs to help residents. Erratic scheduling, inconsistent policies, a lack of sick leave time and stagnant wages were also concerns.

With a union now in place – even without a contract – some of those things are starting to change.

"Supervisors used to write people up just because they'd get emotional," Montag said. "But now we can look into it and we've learned they didn't really have good reasons a lot of the time. We've won a lot."

Even management appears to be coming around, said Martha Stroger, another bargaining team member.

"Management's been working with employees, letting them know that if there's any kind of confusion or altercations, we can talk to our union rep," she said. "Any questions they have, we try to

answer as best as we possibly can."

There have been challenges though. Turnover at Maryville remains high and some early leaders of the organizing effort have left. Other employees are still getting used to the idea of stepping up to lead.

"Getting people to take that plunge without a contract in place can be hard," Council 31 staff representative Kathy Steichen said. "People aren't familiar with having a union. It's a new experience for folks. You have to work through anxieties and concerns."

Progress at the table and away

The bargaining team and management have gradually worked through elements of a first contract, though many key matters remain unresolved.

Management could move faster, bargaining committee members said, but appears genuinely interested in reach-

"People know they're represented. They know the union will stick up for them."

— Fred Montag

ing an agreement.

"I really believe they're become much more accepting of the fact that the union is here and I hope they'll continue," McNutt said. "They've been forthright in bargaining."

Meanwhile, the bargaining team has kept up communication with employees at worksites and off-site meetings. The committee has also released several editions of a newsletter that provides bargaining updates and other relevant information.

"Everyone's pretty happy," Montag said. "People know they're represented. They know the union will stick up for them."

Milestone employees win major change to sick leave policy

A victory for employees at Milestone – a care provider for children and adults with developmental disabilities – shows the difference a union can make.

SINCE VOTING FOR AFSCME REPRESENTATION LAST OCTOBER, EMPLOYEES AT THE ROCKFORD AGENCY HAVE FORMED A BARGAINING TEAM TASKED WITH NEGOTIATING A FIRST CONTRACT. MANY IMPORTANT WORKPLACE CONCERNS WERE PUT ON THE BARGAINING TABLE, BUT THERE WAS ONE ISSUE THAT THE TEAM FELT COULDN'T WAIT FOR NEGOTIATIONS.

For years, Milestone management had required

employees who were calling in sick to find their own replacement for their shift, no matter how seriously ill they might be.

"It used to be really bad," Council 31 staff representative Sara Dorner said. "One employee was having a miscarriage and had to go to the hospital. She called in and they were demanding she find her own coverage. There were some really extreme situations where people were really sick and had to go through the call list and



find someone. Quite a few employees would get disciplined if they called in sick and didn't find their own coverage."

Tressa Wilson, a team leader and member of the bargaining team, said the policy also applied to parents with sick children.

"I'd have to choose between staying home with my sick kid and going to work," she said. "I shouldn't have to make a choice like that."

The policy was simply too extreme to wait for a contract, which can take months to negotiate. The bargaining team insisted on quicker action.

"At one of the early bargaining sessions, we put management on notice and said that employees would not be calling to find their own coverage

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Cook County LPNs find effective representation with AFSCME

Belonging to a union is about more than having a membership card – it's about having an effective voice at the workplace.

LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES (LPNs) WORKING FOR COOK COUNTY FINALLY HAVE BOTH after voting in August to change their union affiliation to AFSCME. The nurses, who work at county hospitals, clinics and other facilities, voted for change after becoming frustrated with their previous union, the Licensed Practical Nurses Association of Illinois (LPNAI).

The LPNs felt that the LPNAI wasn't looking out for them when it came to day-to-day matters at work or on a larger level – their union wasn't engaged in lobbying against cuts to their pensions that were being pushed by County Board President Toni Preckwinkle.

"They weren't strong enough," said Vicki Elzy Smith, an LPN at Stroger Hospital. "If you're going to have



a union, you need a union that's available. You shouldn't have to look for the union. The union should be looking out for you."

The LPNs felt that the county hardly saw them as unionized employees at all, treating them in ways that wouldn't be possible if a strong union had been in place.

Debra Meyer, an LPN with 24 years of experience who works at the county jail, recalled how differently LPNs were treated compared to registered nurses when the county opened a new facility.

"They opened a new building and we were talking about the move – who was going to move, how many people were going to go," she said. "I heard one of the administrators asking who the RNs were because they had to be moved according to the contract, but with the LPNs they could do whatever they wanted."

The LPNs had little power at the bargaining table, too. Their research found their wages had fallen out of step with other county health workers, including those with less experience and qualifica-

tions.

"We've got emergency room techs who make more than the nurses," Smith said. "If the employer doesn't respect the union, you're going to have to take whatever they give you. We would have gotten more things done if we had a more credible union."

Voting for change

THE LPNS WERE looking for better representation when they began researching AFSCME. One big draw was seeing thousands of other county employees represented by Council 31.

"AFSCME represents the largest portion of county employees," Meyer said. "The bigger the umbrella we're a part of, the safer and more secure our jobs and our contracts are."

Enough LPNs expressed interest in joining AFSCME to trigger an election. The LPNAI made attempts at persuading the nurses to stay

with them, but it was too little, too late. When the votes were tallied, AFSCME won handily.

Leaving one union for another wasn't an easy decision, Smith said, but it was the right one.

"I said my prayers on it and I asked God to help me make the right decision," she said. "I was elated when we learned AFSCME won."

With the full power of AFSCME behind them, LPNs now have effective representation in a job that has its share of difficulties.

"We've had quite a few new directors come in and every time it changes, there's a whole new set of rules," Meyer said. "They're supposed to allow us the chance to go to school but they don't give us the chance. They'll say they have staffing needs."

But now, no matter the problem, LPNs feel they can walk into a supervisor's office or to the bargaining table confident they'll have a strong union behind them.

"We'll have more representation, a number to call when we need help and someone who's there 24 hours a day for all the shifts," Smith said. "It's not rocket science. We know that we've got someone there to help us out."

ON THE LOCAL LEVEL

Aurora Sanitary District workers don't back down

AFTER A DIFFICULT SET OF negotiations, Aurora Sanitary District employees, members of Local 3297, finally have a new contract that reflects the bargaining team's insistence on wages comparable to those in nearby communities.

Bargaining took so long that most of the wage increases in the agreement will be awarded retroactively. The four-year contract will expire in June 2015.

Management initially refused to accept the union's research regarding compensation comparables.

"We were very diligent with

our numbers and our comparisons to other communities and even with proof right in front of them they still told us our numbers were overinflated," Local 3297 President Craig Soling said. "But as we compared our positions with those of other municipalities, we also compared upper management's salaries to those nearby. Their salaries were way overinflated compared to what their counterparts were making."

Employees on the step plan will see their base wages rise by 2 percent in each year of the agreement, along with a 2 percent step increase on their anniversary date. Experienced employees who have reached the top of the step plan will receive a 2.5 percent wage

increase each year, along with a 2.5 percent wage increase on their anniversary.

The bargaining team was led by Council 31 staff representative Dick Crofter and included Soling, former local president Miguel Vazquez, Dan Haick, Mike Ortiz, Mike Horton and Drew Klotz.

Breakthrough on wages for Moline School District workers

AFTER TWO PRIOR AGREEMENTS without wage increases, Moline School District employees are now pleased to have a new contract that includes a 5.5 percent wage increase spread over three years.

Council 31 staff representa-

tive Miguel Morga said the Local 672 bargaining committee secured the wage increases and other improvements through their own hard work.

"The local gained a huge advantage because of how well organized they are," he said. "We got around 10 of 19 of our proposals through and management only got one."

The improvements include increased leave time for custodians, a boost to the benefit paid to retiring employees and more clearly defined work shifts.

"Under the economic circumstances, I thought the contract was excellent," Local 672 President Tom Minick said. "We got a raise in each of the three years.

"We've developed a very

good relationship with the board of education. We're proactive. We get things accomplished prior to coming to the table," he said. "Our AFSCME professionalism shows through. We get down to business and negotiate what's good for our membership."

Morga led the bargaining team, which included Minick, Terry Boone, Greg Shelton, Chris Meuser, Dave Duax, Bob Brathall and Scott VanBlaricom.

Wages rise for Champaign County nursing home staff

THE BARGAINING TEAM REPRESENTING Champaign County nursing

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RETIREE NOTES



Rauner outsources his campaign while AFSCME Retirees respond with grassroots activism

FROM HIS NON-STOP POLITICAL commercials flooding the airwaves to endless campaign literature filling mailboxes, Bruce Rauner has constantly demonstrated his willingness to buy the election, no matter the price.

The latest example was revealed recently: Rauner is buying "grassroots" support by outsourcing his political phone-bank operation to another state. Rauner has paid \$295,000 to Victory Phone Lines, a Michigan-based telemarketing firm, with orders to call Illinois voters on Rauner's behalf.

AFSCME Retirees, on the other hand, are not relying on out-of-state hired guns to get the word out about the election. They're taking matters in to their own hands—the old fashioned way.

"I try to call local members from my sub-chapter throughout the day," said Bea Stratton, vice president of the Champaign Sub-Chapter. "Sometimes it can be hard to make it to the door-to-door canvassing operations, but this election is so important that I need to make sure every retiree in my area knows the truth about what Rauner would do to our retirement security."

AFSCME Retirees across the state are reaching out to their fellow union members, as well as their friends and family, and spreading the word about Rauner's plan to further the attacks on their retirement security.

"Everyone, everywhere can do something to help out. We may not be able to out-

spend Bruce Rauner, but we can outwork him any day of the week," said Stratton.

Effort to overturn City of Chicago pension cuts gets a boost

DESPITE VIGOROUS OPPOSITION from AFSCME, last spring the General Assembly passed SB 1922, legislation which reduces the pension benefits of active and retired City of Chicago employees who participate in the Municipal and Laborers pension plans. That includes all AFSCME members who have retired from the city.

AFSCME and other unions are preparing to file suit in circuit court to seek to overturn this new law legislation which is scheduled to go into effect on January 1, 2015. The unions will ask the court for an injunction to stay the implementation until the court makes a final ruling.

Efforts to block unfair cuts to retirement benefits got a big boost in July when the Illinois Supreme Court reversed the dismissal of another suit that AFSCME had filed challenging SB 1313, legislation that repealed the state law that provided retiree health care benefits to state of Illinois and state university employees. By a six-to-one bipartisan margin, the Supreme Court held that under the Illinois state constitution, retirement benefits cannot be diminished.

That decision bodes very well for the suit that AFSCME will soon file to overturn SB 1922, as well as for the ongoing AFSCME suit challenging SB 1, a similar pension-cutting bill that targeted state and university retirees.

Attorney General Lisa Madigan's office, which repre-

sents the state, has already made it clear in the SB 1 case that the government is relying on the argument that the state's dire financial condition justifies overriding constitutional protections. However, the Supreme Court's retiree health benefits ruling (*Kanerva v. Weems*) will make it more difficult for the state to pursue that line of argument.

Rauner's plans for your retirement security

BRUCE RAUNER HAS BEEN TRYING to distance himself from comments he made about SB 1, the bill passed last December that would cut pensions for state and university retirees. When asked for a comment on the bill, Rauner said that "it didn't go far enough."

While Rauner now tries to hide his true plans about public retiree pensions, his words and campaign literature speak volumes.

According to Rauner's own website, he believes the main problem with the pension theft bill passed last year was that it also requires the state to finally pay into the pension funds. Rauner doesn't think this is a good use of state money – the same line of thinking that caused the pension mess in the first place.

Rauner has repeatedly called for switching current workers from a defined-benefit pension to a 401(k)-style defined-contribution plan. He fails to mention this impact this would have on retirees: Under 401(k) plans employee and state contributions do not go to the pension fund, but rather to an account managed by Wall Street banks. What that means is that the pension fund that current retirees draw from would become even more underfunded, as the revenues to the fund would essentially cease over the next couple of decades, further jeopardizing your pension.

Medicare Advantage open enrollment begins Oct. 15

MEDICARE-ELIGIBLE STATE AND university retirees will enter into open-enrollment for their Medicare Advantage plans on October 15.

Similar to enrollment periods in previous years, if you do not wish to make changes to your health insurance then no action is

required on your part. However, for those who are new enrollees and those who wish to make changes, it is important that you begin checking your mailbox in early October for your benefit choice package from CMS.

A significant development this year is the addition of a Health Alliance HMO plan for the 48 counties that currently only have the United Health Care PPO as a plan choice. The Health Alliance HMO will be similar to the Coventry and Humana HMO plans currently offered in the remaining counties.

During the open enrollment period CMS will be hosting seminars across the state, and you will be provided with a schedule of these seminars in your open-enrollment information. Also, AFSCME Retirees has detailed information about these plans as well as answers to frequently asked questions on our website at <http://www.afscme31.org/retirees/get-answers>.

City of Chicago imposes steep health care cost increases on retirees

IN 2013 THE CITY OF CHICAGO announced its intention to phase out health care subsidies to City of Chicago retirees, claiming that such benefits were never promised to retirees.

The plan needed the approval of the Chicago City Council and AFSCME launched a vigorous lobbying effort to convince aldermen to veto the changes. However, few aldermen were willing to take up the fight in defense of retirees and the changes were enacted.

Chicago retirees have now received notices detailing just how much their health plans would cost them. Mayor Rahm Emanuel's administration has increased the price of these plans by upwards of 66 percent for retirees using one of the city's health care plans.

As a result, most City of Chicago retirees previously in AFSCME bargaining units will be paying more than \$600 per month for their health care premiums, and up to \$1,500 per month if they have dependents on their plan. This doesn't even take into account out-of-pocket costs, which are seeing sharp increases as well.

Compounding these problems is the fact that most City of Chicago municipal

workers are not eligible for Social Security or Medicare.

The city initially only gave retirees about three weeks to select a plan, leaving little time for retirees to research their options. In a letter to Emanuel, Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch called on the city to extend the deadline – the City responded by moving the deadline to Oct. 23.

The deadline extension also applied to those who had already selected a plan, giving them three weeks to do more research and, if desired, choose another option.

"AFSCME intends to continue our efforts to ensure affordable health care for all City of Chicago retirees," Lynch stated in the letter to the Mayor. "For now, we want to ensure that retirees are able to make an informed decision as to which of the current choices offered to them is best for their specific situation."

Mae Coonradt (1922-2014)

RETIREE CHAPTER 31 IS MOURNING the loss of Mae Coonradt, the first president of sub-chapter 69 and an active union advocate. She was 91.

Mae was a former president of her AFSCME local and helped organize the administrative professional employees at the Rockford Fire Department, where she worked for more than 30 years. She remained an active member of AFSCME Retiree Chapter 31 into her 80s.

Rauner

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whatever they want by virtue of their wealth."

Just like Scott Walker and Mitch Daniels

RAUNER HOLDS IN HIGH REGARD two of the most anti-union and anti-worker governors in recent memory: Wisconsin's Scott Walker and former Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels. He's called them both "role models" and says they're among "the great governors of America."

"Rauner hates to give details on what he'd do if elected, but his choice of role models makes it clear," Cameron said. "Scott Walker and Mitch Daniels made public employee unions their number one target in office. We need to make sure Bruce Rauner never gets that chance by defeating him on November 4."

Milestone

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unless they were being paid for that time," Dorner said.

The message was heard: Management entered into a memorandum of understanding with the union requiring employees to be paid if they need to find their own replacement. The change in policy has had the intended effect, with supervisors now assuming that responsibility.

More changes coming

NEWS OF THE POLICY CHANGE spread quickly among the direct support providers at Milestone and provided a boost to the bargaining team, which is still hard at work on a full contract.

"People were excited about it and I think it's helped us some," Wilson said. "We wanted to be able to bring something back to people here and it had been hard until now because of management's delays."

Wilson said employees are

gradually getting used to the idea of being in a union. Before organizing, employees felt they had little voice and were either punished or ignored when they spoke up.

"Management made up the rules as they went along," she said. "But now we can actually talk and say what we need to say instead of hiding."

Milestone employees have already formed a member action team and have put out a newsletter to keep up communication. Progress has been slower than the bargaining team would like, but they remain determined to complete a contract.

"We're trying to keep the staff informed because they don't see what's going on at the bargaining table," Wilson said. "Sometimes it's like we're pulling teeth to get just little things done with management, but we're just going to keep pushing."

Back wages

Continued from page 4

Despite a request from Quinn to drop the appeal of the judge's order to pay the outstanding wages, the Attorney General's office pressed forward in appellate court in its effort to overturn the arbitrator's ruling.

The decision by the Appellate Court flatly rejects the Attorney General's argument and affirms the arbitrator's stance.

"We hold that the arbitrator's award comports with the overriding public policy of permitting the State to negotiate enforceable multiyear collective bargaining agreements with unions of state employees, and the award furthers the express constitutional policy forbidding the General Assembly from passing any acts, including insufficient appropriations bills, that impair the obligation of contracts," the appellate judges wrote.

As the legal case slowly unfolded in favor of state employees, AFSCME members persistently lobbied

legislators, an effort that culminated in daily visits to the Capitol by Back Pay Brigades in the last month of the General Assembly's spring session.

Their hard work paid off: The legislature passed, and Quinn signed, a special appropriation that included funding for about 45 percent of the wages owed to employees of the five departments. Those payments were made in August.

As *On the Move* went to press, it was not clear whether the attorney general would ask the state Supreme Court to review the Appellate Court's decision.

"It is our hope that Lisa Madigan, who had continued her appeal over the objection of the governor, will not seek to further appeal this case which never should have been pursued," Lynch said. "In any event there is no doubt that this decision will greatly strengthen our hand in securing all the back money owed to AFSCME members."

ON THE LOCAL LEVEL

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home employees has negotiated a pair of contracts that go significantly beyond what management had proposed.

Both contracts – one for RNs and LPNs and the other for all other staff members – are three-year agreements that include a 2 percent wage increase in each year.

"I would characterize the negotiations as difficult," Council 31 staff representative Michael Wilmore said. "On wages, management initially came out with a half-percent in each year, and that included a bonus employees had already received, so it would have been even less in reality."

The bargaining committee managed to not only win greater wage increases than what management proposed, but also was able to hold off major increases in health insurance costs and other proposed concessions.

"They wanted to add a rule to give 72-hour notice for a personal day and we were able to get that back down to 24 hours," Local 900 executive board member Evelyn Thomas said. "Our main battle was the financial part. We haven't really gotten nice raises for eight years."

Wilmore led the bargaining team and was joined by Thomas, Tea Jones, Tracy Rhone, Clara Bolton, Ashley Grady and Debbie Deremiah.

Sheridan CC drug treatment staff continues push for step plan

EMPLOYEES OF WESTCARE Foundation, a private vendor that handles drug treatment at Sheridan CC, won a new contract in June that includes wage increases in each year and contains other improvements.

However, the bargaining team says the agreement is part of a work in progress as they continue to fight for a full-fledged step plan.

Since WestCare took over as the provider eight years ago, it has only gradually been willing to consider changes to a salary formula that has resulted in some employees being paid less than those with less experience. The bargaining committee has won equity adjustments to help make up for this, but is still fighting for a lasting solution.

"We made some good salary adjustments as far as inequities go, but they won't

be taken care of fully until we get a good step plan," said Local 472 President Rob Fanti.

The new contract increases wages by 3 percent a year in each of its three years. It also locks in some sick days for employees if there's another change in vendor.

"If you had 26 sick days and a new vendor came in, you could lose all of them," Council 31 staff representative Joe Pluger said. "Now you're guaranteed to keep 10 even if a new vendor comes in."

The bargaining team, led by Pluger, included Fanti, Jessica Bateman, Kathy Parks, Larry Mitchell and Erin Deobler.

Arbitration needed for Rock Island County health workers

AFTER A YEAR AND A HALF WITHOUT a contract – and facing a hostile county board – arbitration was necessary to bring about an agreement between Local 2025 and Rock Island County.

Still, the bargaining team is generally satisfied with the final, five-year contract. Wages will rise by 8.9 percent over the life of the agreement.

Brooke Hendrickx, a member of the bargaining team, said the solidarity among health department employees allowed the group to stay united and head into arbitration from a strong negotiating position.

"We were very patient and persistent and we held on strongly to what we believed should come out of the contract negotiations," she said. "Members wore buttons on negotiating days and updates were given as often as we could, even if we didn't have a lot of information. That helped to keep everyone in the loop."

The contract included a bonus in the first year, which Hendrickx said gave employees a boost coming out of a difficult process.

"They got that money immediately," she said. "After waiting for a year and a half, employees were happy to get that right away."

The bargaining team was led by Council 31 staff representative Miguel Morga and included Hendrickx, Helen Cline, Joe Williams, Kelly Carroll and Desi Bond.

Insurance is focus for City of Joliet employees

WHEN CITY OF JOLIET EMPLOYEES negotiated their previous contract, they made significant gains on wages. Headed into talks this year, they decided to make insurance the focus.

While the new, three-year contract for Local 440 includes only a 2 percent wage increase over three years, it also locks in health insurance costs until 2021, accomplishing the bargaining committee's top goal.

There was some delay in negotiating the new contract. The old agreement expired in 2012, but at that time, some city officials, including the city manager, were determined to implement a two-tier wage structure in the successor agreement.

"They wanted a complete two-tier system and were asking for \$75 million in wages back from us," Local 440 President John Dillon said. "We put pressure on them and they dropped a lot of those things."

Council 31 staff representative Joe Pluger led the bargaining team, which included Dillon, Ed Machak, Bill Davis, Kim Klein, Jim Anderson, Terry Juricic and Darryl Hudgens.

City of Evanston employees keep insurance costs in check

CITY OF EVANSTON EMPLOYEES put a halt to rising health insurance prices in their latest agreement, one Local 1891 President Dan Kwiecinski calls "one of our better contracts in many years."

In fact, Kwiecinski said, some members will actually see their health costs go down.

"We changed our way of doing things with health insurance," he said. "We switched to a percentage and most of our premiums are going to go down."

The bargaining team also negotiated wage increases of 2.6 percent, 2.5 percent and 2.4 percent in each of the agreement's three years.

The contract negotiations were led by Council 31 staff representative Flo Estes (now retired), along with Kwiecinski, Vonnie Moore, Dave Matussek, Shawn Pestka and Sarah Jones.

A BIG STEP UP IN Winnebago County



Through steady patience and determination, AFSCME members in the Winnebago County Circuit Clerk's office have won a new contract that includes significant gains after years of being underpaid.

Throughout the fight for a fair contract, members of Local 673 stayed united and active, holding informational pickets and becoming a regular presence at county board meetings.

Members refused to be swayed by rumors designed to weaken their resolve. Now, they've ratified a new, four-year contract that represents real progress.

"This is the third contract I've negotiated and this is the best one we have ever had," said Darlene Gulbrantson, a deputy clerk and bargaining team member. "This one really brought us up to where we are supposed to be."

The bargaining team won a contract that will raise wages by an average of 22.3 percent over five years, including an 8 percent increase in the first year.

That's a major improvement for the deputy clerks, nearly half of whom had been taking home less than \$28,700 a year for full-time work. They had a solid argument for demanding a significant raise: A job study commissioned by the county found that wages for deputy clerks were 17 percent below those for comparable positions in neighboring counties.

"We talked about the job study the county had done and AFSCME staff interpreting that for us and coming up with some wages we had used as our goal in negotiations," said Paul Lanis, another bargaining team member. "We had that in mind going into negotiations. We wanted to get to where some of the comparable counties were and I think we were successful in that."

The waiting game

The contract covering the deputy clerks expired in September 2013. The bargaining team was ready to get to work on a

new agreement, but management continually dragged its feet.

With management uninterested in coming to a quick agreement, the deputy clerks turned outward, holding pickets that received widespread attention in the local media. They also attended county board meetings and won support from the attorneys who work in the court – and depend upon the vital service performed by the clerks.

"We were able to consistently put pressure and attention on the issue," Lanis said. "We were constantly communicating with all of the members. In any negotiation, that's key."

One of the biggest challenges facing the bargaining team was swatting down rumors that they believe were coming from management, including claims that employees would lose their right to back pay without a settlement by September, or that if a strike were to take place, deputy clerks would lose their health insurance.

The bargaining team worked hard to make sure the rumors never became a distraction. When it became clear that the deputy clerks weren't losing their resolve, management's tone shifted, Lanis said.

"There was a point for them where I think it had just dragged on long enough," he said. "We wore them down. We weren't giving in to any of the rumors or innuendo."

With a new agreement now in place, deputy clerks can focus fully on their important work, which keeps the county courthouse running smoothly.

"The more we stick together the stronger we are," Gulbrantson said. "I told everyone to show no fear because that's what they wanted. We encouraged each other to stick together and stand our ground because we work hard."