



Business Manager's Report

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Unions help all workers
- Endorsements are made with one simple goal: Your Job and your paycheck
- Negotiations only months away

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As we begin this New Year, my sincere wish is for you, your family and your friends to have a safe, healthy and happy new year.

Local 71 is facing some serious issues this next year. As we all know, last year was very prosperous for our brother and sister Union members in the private sector. That is a good thing and we do now and always will support better wages, benefits and working conditions for everybody. However *our* battles have been many and the task of working on resolving them are taking an exorbitant amount of time.

I would like to explain a fact that sometimes escapes a great number of people.

Unions help all workers! Whether you are a union member or not, when the wages for union members are fair and allow a family to have a comfortable and secure life style, then the wages for non-union workers as well as other union workers has to rise for the companies to be able to recruit and retain qualified employees. So, our union brothers and sisters have helped the rest of the workers during this last year. They have caused the employers to realize that in order to recruit and retain the high quality workers that Local 71 members are, they must compete with the wages and benefits provided in the construction industries in the private sector and apply it to the public sector that Local 71 represents.

A case in point is to look at the workers in the "right to work" (for less) states. Since there is little Union saturation there, *meaning, less in wages and benefits*, the entire State has a much lower cost of living with substantially lower wages and benefits than States that are not right to work.

Local 71 realizes that some of you might have been able to get employment in the private sector that paid more per hour than you are making in your current position. However it is important to remem-

ber that traditionally, work in the private and public sector are substantially different because private sector work has large hills and valleys in the wages paid to the workers. It's a feast or famine industry so to speak. While public sector work is fairly consistent and can take some time to

catch up with private sector wages because all the contracts require some sort of legislative approval for their funding. It is a slow and arduous process and requires "friends" within the legislative branches to obtain the funding. That is why the endorsement cards the Local sends out are *critically important* to you, the worker. (*see friend or foe-pg3*) The endorsements are made with one simple goal: Your job and your paycheck.



James S Ashton
Business Manager
Secretary-Treasurer

All that being said, I would like to commend those of you who have persevered through these last couple years and I commit to you that Local 71 will continue to do everything we can to maintain a fair, equitable and maintainable wage and benefit schedule for all of our members. We will do our very best to maintain our contract language that protects your job and future. And we will be here for your health benefit needs.

We will begin negotiations in a few months for the State of Alaska members that will cover the next few years and all the above-mentioned issues will be in consideration. We will also send out a questionnaire listing the issues that have been brought to our attention during this contract period as well as welcome any new issues you would like us to address.

In closing, I just want to give my heartfelt thanks to all the members of Local 71 for continuing to do an outstanding job and as always your questions, comments and suggestions are always welcome.

Retirement or Bust??



"Instead of looking for innovative ways to work with the affected people, they passed legislation which guts the concept of a safe and stable retirement for new hires."

How secure do you think your retirement benefits are? Do you think that the current constitutional protections will provide you the security you want when the time comes for you to retire? Are you concerned about having your job privatized? If you aren't thinking about these questions, you should be.

The legislature and the Governor created a crisis in PERS. Instead of looking for innovative ways to work with the affected people, they passed legislation which guts the concept of a safe and stable retirement for new hires. You may think that you are safe because there is a constitutional protection against lowering current employees and retirees benefits. During public testimony in a recent hearing it was suggested that an amendment to the constitution be introduced to allow the legislature and Governor to reduce current employees and retirees benefits.

Another example is the ongoing efforts to privatize our work. Alaska Supply Chain Integrators (ASCI) got legislation passed a couple of years ago to take over the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities procurement functions in Southeast Alaska. Local 71 lost four positions and the responsibility for

getting the parts and pieces that keep our roads open and airports safe have fallen on the backs of the crews. ASCI had the audacity to get another bill introduced to extend their contract another three years. Despite testimony that the program is imploding both the House and Senate passed the bill. It is waiting its last procedural hurdle before being sent to the Governor.

As a public employee, whether state or municipal, there are elected officials that will use you as a scapegoat for their own political ends. That is why Public Employees Local 71 has the Supporting League (Political League) check off. Funds from this deduction go to supporting candidates that support your job, wages and benefits. If you don't think your job or benefits are important, then by all means leave that space blank. If you think that you are an asset to your employer then help your Union help you and sign up for the Supporting League.

If you are not currently signed up for the Political / Supporting league, you can contact Local 71 for more information about how to contribute. Our strength is in our numbers.

New Business Representative sought for Anchorage Office



"I got a blank memo too. Management must have added another unwritten rule."

We are currently looking for a Business Representative to fill the position in our Anchorage office.

This position requires good communication skills, patience, a strong desire to support the Union and its members as a whole as well as individually. This position, though normally between the hours of 8-5, will require extended hours in order to meet the needs of our membership. Travel for training, conferences and membership meetings is also a requirement of this position.

We offer an excellent salary and benefits package for the right individual.

Please submit a resume to:

Jim Ashton
Business Manager
2510 Arctic Blvd
Anchorage, AK 99503

This position closes at 5:00 PM February 15th 2006. Applicants will be contacted for interview after that date.

Friend or Foe?

Once again we are coming up on an election year and your Union wants to remind everyone that we have some very critical races coming up. As you are aware Public Employees took quite a beating in the last session of the legislature. It is about time that we as Public Employees start fighting back! The best way to fight these “representatives of the people” (and I use that term only in the loosest of interpretation) is to beat them at the polls!! We implore you to go to the polls and vote for the people that will do the best for us.

This might come as a shock to some of you but there are a group of legislators in Juneau making decisions affecting your livelihood everyday who don't like public employees. When you receive the flyers we send out recommending people to vote for, keep in mind that we don't just pick these people out of a hat and then put their names out there for you to start your fireplace fires with. We ask them questions and in some cases drill them pretty hard on your behalf to determine who will do the best job FOR YOU!

Our strength is in our numbers! If all public employees voted (and you should) the same way on candidates or issues, there is no way we could not impose our collective will on any election or issue in this great state. We cannot do it alone! We cannot do it for you! If you or someone you know is not registered to vote, contact your nearest Local 71 office and we will help you get registered. Each office has registration forms available and would be happy to assist you.

Help us help you!

Remember SB-141 = Tier 4 = no benefits at retirement! If you are in Tiers 1-3 don't think you are safe with the current make-up of the legislature, there are still some scary things out there on the table that can be done... especially if they gain more seats!

“Our strength is in our numbers!”

Thank You for Voting!!

We've decided to resurrect the “Thank You for Voting” section of our newsletter. For those of you who might not remember, or for those who are new members this, was a section that was dedicated to those members who actually get out and exercise their right to vote. We get a copy of the voting rolls and we put those names of members who vote in this section and thank them for voting and we ask that you do the same.

It's important to note that we do not have any way of knowing how you voted only that you did vote. This information is available to the general public as a matter of public record. We

are very diligent about making sure your name appears correctly, however mistakes can happen. If you voted and your name does not appear give us a call and we will be happy to correct this oversight by printing an addendum the next newsletter.

Let your voice be heard!!

Contact your Legislator.

They work for you!!

<http://www.local71.com/legis.htm>

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Anchorage, AK 99503

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www.local71.com

New Pin Design

Local 71 has decided to hold a contest with a prize of \$100.00 along with a framed certificate of appreciation for the best redesign of our Local 71 orange & black lapel pin.

It must include our traditional Local 71 logo, reflect our belonging to the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA) and also reflect that we are from the Great State of Alaska.



Current Local 71 lapel pin

Please keep in mind that the winning design will be our new lapel pins. This means of course that everything will have to be reduced to fit on a lapel without being so heavy as to require suspenders to hold it upright.

The contest is open to all members and family of Local 71 and we encourage all to participate. The winner will be decided by the Union and all entries should be received by March 15, 2006. Good Luck!

Request for Bids

The Anchorage Office has needed an overhang to protect people from rain, snow and ice as they come in and out of our entrances for quite some time. This summer we called around to try and get estimated to have this done but we received almost no response and the response we did receive was determined to be too high so Local 71 rejected it outright. It was decided we would open the bidding of this project to our many very qualified members who may be interested in assisting the union.

We need for any interested parties to come look at the building see what we are attempting and give us an estimate for materials and labor (keep in mind any donations of time and materials is tax deductible).

For more information please contact the Anchorage Office at (907)276-7211.