



# INFORMER

FEBRUARY 2008~ SUPPLEMENTAL

## BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT



The past year brought with it challenges and accomplishments for all of us to be proud of. I started the year swinging through Southeast Alaska visiting some of the duty stations there including Juneau, Wrangell, and Petersburg and I have the pictures to prove it. I also sat down with the state to negotiate our next contract for the Local 71 members working for the state of Alaska.

Throughout the negotiations a constant theme emerged: quality workforce. Well, I am proud to say that our Public Employee Local 71 members perform above the standard wherever they are, Bethel, Kotzebue, Ketchikan, Anchorage, across the state, no matter who they work for, the state of Alaska, Anchorage School District, Municipality of Anchorage or the Haines Borough. And because of your performance, Local 71 members with the state received the largest pay raise in 25 years. And because of your performance, the Haines Borough received the strongest contract it has ever had.

Speaking of strong contracts, there have been a number of issues over the past year where new employees within the administration have tried to reinterpret long standing provisions of our contract. Last spring I started to hear that our travel provisions in the state contract were confusing some folks in payroll. I sat down with the Director of Personnel and we came to an understanding that there has been no change in policy. Since then there have been a few pockets of resistance to that resolution, but once those concerns have been brought to my attention, the administration has been very accommodating in rectifying the problem. If you hear of any other "new" interpretations to our contract language please give your Business Representative a call and let them know about it so we can address it.

The state of Alaska has finally started to acknowledge the need for a more comprehensive approach to developing its workforce. I have been pushing the apprenticeship model with the state for over 10 years. Last year they finally acknowledged the need to sit down and hammer out the legal details with me. I have been meeting regularly with representatives from the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and the Department of Administration to create a joint trust to administer the Local 71 apprenticeship program. The idea is to start small with the apprenticeship and then develop our training capacity to address needs in all our classifications. I have been working with the administration to establish a jointly administered program, but if they find that they can't participate, we will be looking at how we continue without them with the assistance of LIUNA our international union.

We have used our new PR campaign to inform and educate the public and the legislature and it has gone a long ways in building support for our Union throughout Alaska. We have been strengthening ties with our brother Unions, working together in Solidarity to champion the working men and women of Alaska. This February membership meeting at Local 341 marks an end to the years of frustration with lack of parking and

a cramped meeting area. On our web site you will find continuing improvements for information on the Trust, state wide job openings, medical forms and more effective communications on issues affecting our membership. We strive to keep the web site updated, informative and interesting.

The Health Trust has been undergoing a series of changes and improvements. Your Trustees along with the very talented team of Administrators, staff, consultants and legal counsel have orchestrated some new benefits as well as tailoring some of the requirements to better fit our membership's usage and recommendations. For example beginning January 1, 2008 the trust began offering Annual Wellness benefits for all our covered members and eligible family members. This will help to educate and treat our membership so we all stay healthy and maintain a healthy life style.

The Trust began offering a Disease Management Program to our members effective July 1, 2007. This benefit will help our members who are living with life altering diseases such as diabetes, asthma, coronary heart disease (CAD), congestive heart failure (CHF) and coronary obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)

The Trust has upgraded our technology and can now receive and accept "faxed" enrollment forms and information.

Effective October 3, 2007 only the member's signature is required on enrollment materials. The spouse's signature is no longer required. This is intended to simplify the enrollment process.

Additionally, through the Trust's participation with the HCCMCA we have been offering the annual Health Fairs and have expanded them to now include MAT-SU. The number of Local 71 members and dependents who participate in this service has continued to grow every year and we are pleased to see our members take advantage of this service.

This is just a sampling of some of the improvements that your Health Trust has undergone. I encourage you to watch for and read the new quarterly Newsletter that the Trust is sending out. It will be chock full of valuable information and keep you informed on any new improvements and benefits with your Trust.

Throughout the past year, we have been spreading the word that the men and women of Public Employee's Local 71 are brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers bringing Alaskans closer together. Our motto 'Working Hard for Alaska, Working hard for you' means a lot to me. I believe that and stand by it. I want you to know you have my continuing commitment to work hard for Alaska and especially you the members and families of Local 71.

