



Labor Fax

December 22, 2004

Volume 8, Issue 13

Labor Fax Co-Editors:
Charles Wowkanech Laurel Brennan
President Secretary-Treasurer
Associate Editor:
Steve Lenox
(609) 989-8730 • www.njaficio.org

-2004- A YEAR IN REVIEW

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO had a hugely successful year in 2003 leaving many to wonder how we could top it in 2004. We knew we had to hit the ground running which is why in January we:

- Joined Governor Jim McGreevey when he signed legislation requiring the State Board of Examiners of Master Plumbers to certify workers installing, improving, repairing, or maintaining medical gas piping at medical facilities.
- Worked with members of the New Jersey State Senate to ensure the passage of legislation establishing penalties for violations of the "New Jersey Prevailing Wage Act."
- Attended and addressed the Women in Leadership Development Conference at Rutgers University.
- Launched Operation Clean Sweep 2004, an effort to ensure the accuracy of union membership files, allowing us to improve our successful election programs.
- Held a four-day LEAP training course for members of UNITE 630 to prepare workers who are subject to lay offs and plant closings.
- Partnered with, through our OSHEP Project, PACE 2-397 and Crompton Corporation to develop a site specific pollution prevention training program at their Perth Amboy facility.

Leap year gave us an extra day in February, and with everything the New Jersey State AFL-CIO was working on we needed it! In just 29 days we:

- Testified before the Senate Labor Committee in support of legislation extending prevailing wage requirements to projects financed by the CRDA, County Improvement Authorities, the Educational Facilities Financing Authority and the NJ Health Care Facilities Financing Authority.
- Offered LEAP services to members of IBT 802 being laid off from Corey Furniture in Elizabeth.

ANOTHER YEAR OVER

By Charles Wowkanech & Laurel Brennan

In just over a week we will be closing the door on 2004 and welcoming in 2005. This has certainly been an eventful year here in New Jersey, and one that we will recall proudly for all that we accomplished!

In the following pages you will see some of the highlights of the year ending. Month by month you will see that the labor movement in New Jersey was successful at moving forward the agenda of New Jersey's working families. Whether we were supporting legislation, working to elect labor-friendly candidates, or standing in solidarity with our brothers and sisters across the state it is clear that there is no slow season for the labor movement in our state!

Your constant support and willingness to give of yourself throughout the year to better the lives of New Jersey's working families is truly commendable and the key ingredient to our success. And it is through your trust that we are able to accomplish all that we do on your behalf.

As 2004 comes to a close we should be proud of what we accomplished. Among other things, this year saw the total number of rank-and-file union members elected throughout New Jersey to 309; legislation signed into law establishing penalties for failure to pay prevailing wage; a call for an increase in the minimum wage; and the launching of a new tool, the E-Activist Network, to keep union members in touch with their elected officials on important issues.

There is still much left to accomplish in 2005. Over the next twelve months we are committed to working with all of our members and affiliates to continue to work towards the improvement of the lives of New Jersey's working families and the expansion of the labor movement.

Thank you for your support in 2004.



1998
Labor Fax
APEX Award

- NJ State AFL-CIO: The Voice for Working Families in New Jersey -
OPEIU:153

- Participated with AFL-CIO President John Sweeney in “Worker Need Over Wall Street Greed” rally in support of striking California UFCW members.
- Assisted New Jersey Department of Labor Rapid Response Team providing services to dislocated workers at Ford Motor Company plant closing in Edison.

They say that March comes in like a lion and out like a lamb. Fortunately for our nearly one million members and 1,000 affiliates the New Jersey State AFL-CIO keeps working at the same pace no matter what the seasons bring. In March we:

- Participated in the State Apprenticeship Conference sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Labor.
- Facilitated a 30-hour OSHA Outreach Training for SWMIA Local 25.
- Offered HAZCOM training to Bridgeton High School Students.
- Conducted the 6th annual School Boards/Non-Partisan labor candidates seminar.
- Participated in New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning Conference in Newark.

Spring arrives in April, a time of new hope and new opportunities. We knew there was a lot still to accomplish for New Jersey’s working families which is why in April we:

- Facilitated an emergency response training course to all affiliates featuring Board Member Tom Canzanella, President of the Firefighters Association of New Jersey.
- Attended and spoke at the Governor’s Workforce Summit in Trenton .
- Visited Washington, D.C. to learn about the E-Activist Network.
- Elected 10 rank and file union members to school boards across the state.
- Commemorated Workers’ Memorial Day in Atlantic City by dedicating monument to working men and women killed on the job.
- Conducted Annual New Jersey State AFL-CIO Retirees’ Committee Eldercare Forum in Edison.

The flowers bloom in May and so did the labor movement in New Jersey. During this month we:

- Elected two rank-and-file union members to non-partisan town councils.

- Worked with Senator Joe Coniglio, a successful labor candidate, to secure the release of ‘anti-outsourcing’ legislation from the Senate State Government Committee.
- Joined with HPAE members at their “One Voice” Rally calling for improved patient care standards.
- Testified before the Assembly Labor Committee on legislation amending the “Conscientious Employee Protection Act.”
- Conducted a Health and Safety Train-the-Trainer course on topics including ergonomics, sexual harassment, workplace violence, hazard awareness and development of Safety Committees.
- Testified at a forum hosted by the United Nations Association of New Jersey on the negative effects of NAFTA.

June marks the midway point in the year, time to reassess what we had accomplished and where we had to go. With summer drawing near we kept up the pace and:

- Held our 26th Constitutional Convention in Atlantic City which featured the unanimous reelections of President Charles Wowkanech and Secretary-Treasurer Laurel Brennan.
- Welcomed Presidential candidate John Kerry to New Jersey and offered him the complete support of the labor movement in our state for his bid for the White House.
- Held the first of what became nearly weekly bus trips to Pennsylvania to assist our labor brothers and sisters secure that state’s electoral votes for Presidential Candidate John Kerry.
- Worked with the New Jersey State Legislature and the Governor’s office to pass a budget which would reduce the tax burden on New Jersey’s working families.
- Held a LEAP Train-the-Trainer program to enable unions to work pro-actively with their members threatened by layoffs and plant closings.
- Worked with the McGreevey Administration to reorganize the New Jersey Department of Labor. This reorganization gave birth to the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and helped to eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy so those seeking employment may pursue it in a streamlined and efficient manner.

- Conducted the 8th Annual Labor Candidates school at Rutgers University.
- Launched the E-Activist Network, an on-line program allowing New Jersey State AFL-CIO members to communicate with their elected officials about issues important to them and the labor movement.
- Participating in events across the state commemorating Labor Day.
- Joining Governor McGreevey at the historic signing of an Executive Order prohibiting the practice of exporting state funded contracts overseas.

We didn't let the dog days of summer get us down in July and August! We let the sunshine in and kept working and accomplished quite a bit in what some call the slow months. During this time we:

- Joined Governor McGreevey at the signing legislation enacting the "Help America Vote Act". New Jersey's set of election reforms were the best in the country ensuring that our state's working families would be heard in electoral contests.
- Participated in meetings of the Governor's Council to Support and Enhance New Jersey's Military and Coast Guard Installations.
- Attended convention celebrating the merger of the Union of Needletrades, Textiles and Industrial Employees (UNITE) and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union (HERE). This merger created UNITE HERE, representing over 440,000 active members and 400,000 retirees throughout North America.
- Attended the Orientation for the College Credit for Apprenticeship Program hosted by the American Council on Education. This program was announced by Governor McGreevey at the New Jersey State AFL-CIO Convention in June.
- Received training by the National Fire Protection Association on "Electrical Safety Programs."
- Ensured that the labor movement's voice was heard by attending the Democratic National Convention in Boston.
- Joined with workers across the country to oppose President Bush's overtime pay grab. Through the E-Activist network over 1,000 letters were sent to our representatives in Washington asking them to support legislation protecting the overtime pay of nearly six million workers across the country.

By September we were geared up for the upcoming Presidential Elections. We were prepared for the busy couple of months that awaited us and kept busy by:

- Hosting a discussion with Mr. Thomas Gass, author of "Nobody's Home: A Candid Reflection of a Nursing Home Aide."
- Holding the 4th annual New Jersey State AFL-CIO Retirees' Legislative Conference featuring Congressman Rush Holt (D-12), and New Jersey State Senator Joe Vitale (D-19).

- Attending a rally for Vice-Presidential candidate John Edwards in Newark.
- Dispatching New Jersey State AFL-CIO staff across the state to assist with the coordination of the Labor 2004 program.
- Testifying before the Assembly Labor Committee supporting legislation requiring the notification of workers prior to plant closings and the prohibition of the use of tax dollars to thwart union organizing.

We kept the momentum going through October, continuing to track legislation in Trenton, coordinated efforts to elect labor endorsed candidates across the state and ensure that New Jersey's working families were heard by:

- Joining Senator Jon Corzine in an information session on the new overtime regulations recently promulgated by the Bush Administration.
- Hosting our Legislative Conference in Atlantic City which included a lunch honoring the 37 labor candidates and a political director's meeting open to all delegates.
- Honoring Governor Jim McGreevey for his commitment to the labor movement throughout his career in public office.
- Submitting the final voter registrations of union members collected through the WORKER/VOTER program. 35,000 union members were registered to vote in 2004 through this program.
- Recruiting 10,000 labor volunteers to work on the races of labor endorsed candidates, including Presidential candidate John Kerry, during the final month of the campaign.
- Addressing the Chemical Industry Council of New Jersey at the PolyOne Plant in Pedrickstown.
- Testifying before the Senate Law and Public Safety and Veteran's Affairs Committee against legislation concerning the procurement of goods manufactured by inmates.
- Attending the United Steelworkers of America's District 4 Education Conference in Atlantic City.

We went into November with very high hopes! We didn't let the results of the Presidential race get us down. There were many positives that we could focus on. In November we:

- Elected 29 rank-and-file union members to local and county offices across the state. This brought our total to 309 union members being elected to office in New Jersey since 1997.
- Recruited thousands of labor volunteers to carry out Labor 2004's 'GOTV' activities. These efforts assured Presidential Candidate John Kerry's electoral success in our state and led to the reelection of 9 labor endorsed Congressman and State Senator Joseph Doria (D-31).
- Testified before the Senate Labor Committee on the working poor.
- Conducted LEAP training for displaced workers at the Dallas Airmotive Plant in Millville.
- Announced enhancements to the New Jersey State AFL-CIO Occupational Safety and Health Education (OSHEP) Program.
- Held the first meeting of the Occupational and Health Education Advisory Board. Participants included Congressman Frank Pallone (D-6), New Jersey Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development Thomas Carver, New Jersey Commissioner of Environmental Protection Bradley Campbell, and 28 other representatives of labor, business, academia and government.

All of these accomplishments and still a month to go! We wanted to make sure we ended 2004 as strongly as we started it so in December we:

- Participated in a press conference with the Fairness Alliance calling for an increase in the minimum wage to \$7.50 an hour.
- Spoke to an Economics class at Ramsey High School to help educate the future generation of leaders about the importance of the labor movement.
- Testified before the Assembly Health Committee in support of legislation requiring carriers that cover behavioral health care services to disclose certain information to insureds.
- Voiced our support for legislation extending the "card check method" of organizing to certain employees not covered by the NLRB. Our voices were heard and this bill was released by the Senate Labor Committee.
- Participated in a meeting on the implementation of New Jersey's Child Welfare Reform Plan.

- Worked to ensure the passage of S-689 (Vitale) in the New Jersey State Senate. This bill, which passed 32-6, requires hospitals and nursing homes to provide certain staffing information to the public.

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO welcomed several new affiliates in 2004. Among those who will be joining our more than one million members and 1,000 affiliates in support of working families in 2005 are:

- Maritime Port Council of Greater NY & Vicinity
- Maritime Port Council of Delaware & Vicinity
- American Postal Workers Union (APWU) Local 1020
- American Postal Workers Union (APWU) Local 986
- Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA) Local 424
- Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU)/ United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 338
- International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Local 4363
- International Longshoremen Association (ILA) Local 2049

Thousands of workers won a voice at work throughout New Jersey in 2004. The New Jersey State AFL-CIO is proud to welcome the following new union members to the labor family:

- Laborers Local 734– Lambert Furniture Company
- UNITE– H&M Distribution Centers
- AFSCME Council 73, Local 2287– Mercer County Library, Mercer County Improvement Authority
- SEIU 32BJ– Janitors at several companies in Bergen County
- AFT– Milton Katz Jewish Community Center, New Jersey State Federation of Teachers, Guttenberg School District, Ocean County College
- UFCW Locals 1358, 1360 and 56– Correctional Medical Services, Mercer County Geriatric Center, Homastote, Carteret Senior Living home, and Mivila Foods Corporation
- New Jersey Nurses Union/CWA Local 1091– St. Barnabas Health Care System
- CWA – Lower Alloways Creek township workers, Passaic County Supervisors of Elections, West Orange Library and Atlantic City Facilities and Supported Employees Unit, Children's Aid and Family Services
- AWIU 89– K&S
- PACE– Air Products & Chemicals
- BCTGM-Rich's Mother's Kitchen

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO was proud to confront labor challenges facing our members in 2004 and stand in solidarity with them on picket lines throughout the state. Unions facing strikes and contract disputes in 2004 included:

- JNESO District Council 1– striking against Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Burlington County
- HPAE Local 5091– Bergen Regional Medical Center
- RWDSU 108/UFCW– Embassy Suites, Parsippany
- UNITE HERE Local 54– Atlantic City Casinos
- IBEW System Council U-3 Local Unions 327, 1289, 1298, 1303, 1309– JCP&L

The labor family in New Jersey lost many good friends and supporters in 2004. While the New Jersey State AFL-CIO said goodbye, the support the following individuals gave on behalf of New Jersey's working families will be remembered for many years to come:

- John T. Dunlop– Former U.S. Secretary of Labor
- Don Silberman– Past President of New Jersey Council of College Locals
- Glenn D. Cunningham– Jersey City Mayor and State Senator, District 31
- Jack Critchley– Past President of New Jersey State Building and Construction Trades Council
- Jim Dobbs– Organizer, UNITE Pennsylvania, Ohio, and South Jersey Joint Board
- Jack Merkel– Former Executive Director, AFSCME District Council 73 and New Jersey State AFL-CIO Executive Board Member
- Sam Diubaldi– Former New Jersey Commissioner of Labor
- Thomas Foy– State Senator, District 7, and former Counsel to New Jersey State AFL-CIO
- James D'Heron, Past President IAFF 2467
- Philip Girardi– Flint Glass 701 and former New Jersey State AFL-CIO Executive Board Member

Upcoming Events

January 12, 2005	Retirees Committee Rutgers Labor Center
February 7-11, 2005	OSHEP Workshop Hazardous Waste IBEW Local 456 New Brunswick
March 7-11, 2005	OSHEP Train-the-Trainer Hazardous Waste IBEW Local 456 New Brunswick
February 8, 2005	PEC Meeting Trenton
February 16, 2005	HAAC Meeting Trenton
March 3-4, 2005	Apprenticeship Conference Atlantic City
June 14-15, 2005	COPE/Endorsement Conference Borgata Hotel Casino and Spa Atlantic City

Shop Union for the Holidays



This holiday season, support good jobs by giving union-made gifts. Your shopping dollars can keep good-paying jobs – with good wages and benefits – in your community.

For a fine selection of holiday gifts, go to: www.shopunionmade.org

Union Label & Service Trades Dept., AFL-CIO