



Labor Fax

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A NEW BEGINNING

By Charles Wowkanech & Laurel Brennan

With 12 bills supported by labor signed into law, an additional sixty rank-and-file union members elected to public office, thousands of new members added to our labor family and the continued expansion of our Occupational Safety and Health Education Program last year, it is hard to imagine that this year can be as successful as last.

However, as experience has shown us over the years, every time we challenge our affiliates and members to do more, you come through! We have no doubt that your continued commitment to improving the lives of New Jersey's working families, and growing the labor movement will be the major ingredient in our recipe for success in 2006.

It is no secret that there are many challenges facing our state's lawmakers. In the coming months, among other things, they will be asked to fix the Transportation Trust Fund, protect workers' pensions, ensure that employers are paying their fair share towards the cost of health care, and find ways to continue building new schools for our children. With Governor Corzine steering the ship, and 89% of the candidates labor endorsed for the Assembly and Senate last November, currently serving in the State Legislature, we have no doubt that the needs and desires of the working families we represent will be considered in every one of these debates.

With the upcoming elections for U.S. Senate and House of Representatives there is no doubt that political activity will once again be a major part of our agenda this year. Many of our legislative victories and successes at bringing more workers a voice on the job have been made possible by our political activity, and it is through this vehicle that we will continue to grow the labor movement in 2006.



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Labor Fax
APEX Award

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WILD WOMEN

The 3rd annual Women in Leadership Development (WILD) Conference will be held March 24-25, 2006. This two-day conference will begin Friday evening at the East Brunswick Hilton with a welcome reception, dinner, role-playing activities designed to examine the consequences of career, family and other life choices, and an opportunity to meet Mary Gatta, Director of Workforce Policy and Research at the Center for Women and Work, and Kevin McCabe, Director of Special Programs at the NJ Regional Council of Carpenters. On Saturday, Conference attendees will participate in panel discussions on issues such as building and shaping the labor movement and mobilizing around women's health issues. For more information about this conference contact Laurel Brennan, Secretary-Treasurer at 609-989-8730.

2005... A YEAR OF ACTION

Thanks to the support of Governor Dick Codey, Assembly Speaker Albio Sires and pro-working majorities in both the Assembly and Senate, twelve bills which were supported by labor were signed into law during the 2004/2005 legislative session. Among other things, these bills banned the outsourcing of taxpayer-funded service contracts, raised the minimum wage and established the card check method of union recognition for workers not covered by the National Labor Relations Act. For a complete list of bills signed into law please visit www.njaflcio.org.

2006...THE BEST IS YET TO COME!

With a new Legislative session upon us, there is a fresh opportunity for the labor movement in New Jersey to advocate for legislation which will improve the lives of our State's working families. Among our priorities for this session are bills requiring profitable employers to pay their fair share for employee health care, replenishing the Transportation Trust Fund, and funding employee pensions. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any other legislation please contact Eric Richard or Steve Lenox at 609-989-8730.

375 AND COUNTING

With the elections of Mark Scian, IAFF 2663, in Evesham; Chuck Lynch, IAFF 2883, in Washington Township; and Kevin Scanlon, IAFF 3198, in Mount Laurel as Fire Commissioners, the number of rank-and-file union members elected to public office through the New Jersey State AFL-CIO Labor Candidates Program is now 375.

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

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ON THE ROAD

Officers and Staff of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO:

...attended meeting of the Bergen County Building and Construction Trades Council.

...participated in Non-traditional Career Resource Center Advisory Committee meeting and Gender Parity Council meeting.

...spoke at rally in support of saving St. Mary Hospital in Hoboken.

...presented testimony to Legislative Committees in support of bills to increase notification requirements of plant closings and mass layoffs, prohibit unilateral changing of terms and conditions of employment by public employees, require the Department of Health and Senior Services to review the standard of care at facilities in which 40% or more of the direct patient care nursing staff are temporary hires.

...addressed economics class at Ramsey High School about impact of big box retailers and contributions of the Supermarket industry on New Jersey's economy.

...participated in Women in Leadership Roundtable discussion with Senator Bob Menendez.

APPRENTICESHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO is proud to continue to support NJ PLACE and the program's efforts to give union members increased opportunities to obtain college degrees. This program, the only one of its kind in the nation, was created through collaboration among organized labor, New Jersey's community colleges, and several state agencies.

In order to be counted for college credits, apprenticeship programs must be evaluated by the American Council on Education (ACE). Five unions- The International Association of Iron Workers; Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers; New Jersey Association of Pipe Trades; the New Jersey Regional Council of Carpenters; and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers have completed this evaluation process and based on thorough reviews of each of these programs, ACE has recommended that apprentices receive between 45 and 70 credits for completion of the evaluated union programs.

In response to the program, all 19 of New Jersey's community colleges have agreed to create a new Technical Studies degree which will allow participants to apply their credits towards an Associate Degree in Applied Science. This degree allows apprenticeships to combine general education requirements with customized course work and specialize in construction management, business management or technology.

"Through this program, the academic achievements of union apprentices are being recognized," stated Charles Wowkanech, President, New Jersey State AFL-CIO. "We look forward to continuing to build this program and increasing the educational opportunities of the young men and women entering our State's workforce."

For more information about the NJ PLACE program please contact Maureen King, NJ PLACE Director at 609-392-3434.

Upcoming Events

March 11, 2006	School Board/Non-partisan Candidate's Seminar Trenton
March 24-25, 2006	WILD Conference Rutgers Labor Education Center
June 13-14, 2006	COPE/Endorsement Conference Caesar's Atlantic City
June 25-30, 2006	Eastern Seaboard Apprenticeship Conference Atlantic City
July 30-August 4	Northeast Union Women's Summer School Rutgers Labor Education Center
August 4-6, 2006	Labor Candidates School Rutgers Labor Education Center

OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP 2006

In our first major step towards electing a pro-working family delegation to the United State Congress, the New Jersey State AFL-CIO has launched OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP 2006. The success of this operation will determine how efficiently we can communicate with union voters on the issues that matter most. With a highly contested U.S. Senate race and dozens of rank-and-file members running for election to public office, we respectfully request your cooperation to make the 2006 COPE file the most accurate ever. Please submit your current membership roster to the New Jersey State AFL-CIO by March 15, 2006. For more information about how to submit your membership roster please contact John Shea, COPE Director, at 609-989-8730.

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO would like to welcome the 95 members of the National Conference of Firemen & Oilers, System Council #2, SEIU to our Labor Family.

IN MEMORIAM

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO extends our condolences to the family of Brother Ted Ward on his recent passing. Brother Ward, 37, was a member of both I.U.O.E. Local 68 and IATSE Local 917 and Labor 2004 Coordinator.

We also lost a good friend in late December with the passing of Brother Frank Wade. Brother Wade was the long-time Executive Director of the New Jersey State Building and Construction Trades Council.