



# The Guardian

News from the hardworking men and women of DOC

Members of Teamsters Local 117

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Local 117 Shop Stewards at DOC gather for the annual Shop Stewards' Seminar

## Legal team files suit to enforce AHCC arbitration

Your Local Union has stepped up its fight for your right not to have personal holiday day requests arbitrarily denied by DOC. The Teamsters Local 117 legal team, with the help of outside counsel, has filed a lawsuit on the issue in Thurston County Superior Court in an effort to enforce an arbitration award dated August 14, 2009.

The award ruled that absent good faith job-related reasons for denial, DOC must grant personal holiday leave upon request. Despite arbitrator Richard M. Humphrey's 2009 ruling, DOC has continued to refuse to grant leave requests, in many cases without good faith reasons. In doing so, DOC is continuing to violate its collective bargaining agreement with the Union.

Monitor your Local Union's website for updates on the issue and if you have questions, talk to your Business Representative.

## Battle to save Larch, McNeil down to the wire

With the special session in the Washington State Legislature winding down, the Senate and House leadership may have reached a tentative deal that would keep doors open at both the Larch Corrections Center (LCC) and the McNeil Island Corrections Center (MICC), but would significantly downsize both facilities.

Under this tentative plan, Larch would be reduced by half, while McNeil Island would shrink to 256 inmates by the end of the biennium ending in 2011. This plan would also involve siting of a new prison in the Western part of the State, which would need to be constructed should MICC ever be fully closed.

Local 117 has been on the front

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## FACILITY CLOSURES

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lines in the fight to keep both Larch and McNeil open. Your Local Union has led lobbying efforts, held direct talks with the leadership in Olympia, published letters and editorials in newspapers statewide, and partnered with a group of public safety advocates to prevent closures and the elimination of capacity at the DOC.

"We are engaging in a full-court press to maintain full capacity in our State prison system and prevent the closure of these institutions," said Teamsters Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer, Tracey A. Thompson. "Although we are pleased that full closures are now unlikely, we believe that the Legislature's plan to significantly reduce capacity at LCC and MICC is extremely shortsighted."

Thompson added that as soon as it is certain that these institutions will remain open, your Local Union's efforts will turn to mitigating the impact of reductions and fighting to ensure that the construction of any new facility is complete and that capacity is brought online before any closures occur in the future.

# News from Olympia

## FUND HEALTH CARE FOR STATE EMPLOYEES AND THEIR FAMILIES

**T**eamsters Local 117 is a part of a broad coalition of Unions engaged in the fight to fully fund the PEBB health care plan for state employees. State workers have already made significant sacrifices with respect to their health care in 2010.

The PEBB program is facing shortages now because the Legislature diverted some \$200 million out of the fund back in 2008. Unless \$65 million is allocated for state employee health care, your out-of-pocket costs will skyrocket.

Take action now! Call 1-800-562-6000 and tell legislators to fund state worker health insurance with at least \$65 million in General Fund-State funds in the final budget (ESSB 6444) for state employee health care.

## FURLOUGH BILL PASSES HOUSE, 50-38

**O**n April 2, the House passed the state employee furlough bill by a vote of 50-38. This comes after the Senate approved the bill back in March.

Although this is bad news for state employees, most Corrections employees, including all custody and nursing staff would be exempt. Your Local Union strongly believes that your collective bargaining agreement protects all other Corrections' employees as well.

Certainly if the bill becomes law as we suspect it will, the Local 117 legal team will launch a vigorous challenge to legislation.

State employees have already lost their cost-of-living wage increases, suffered significant increases in out-of-pocket health costs, and many have lost their jobs. This is not the time to balance the budget on the backs of state employees with regressive furlough legislation that will require even greater sacrifices.