

insight

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS & FRIENDS

OF PROTEC17

Summer
2023
Vol 28
No. 2





On the Cover:

Meet our newest members at the City of Mount Vernon! These 15 specialists joined our union in May 2023, building a new unit at a new employer for PROTEC17. Please join us in wishing them a warm welcome! Read more on page 10. ■

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PROTEC17 Executive Board Election Notice

Nominations are now open for the following PROTEC17 Executive Board positions: State of Washington Trustee (currently held by Mason Emrys) and Membership-at-Large Trustee (currently held by Renee Thompson). The terms are three (3) years and will expire in 2027.

Details:

- (1) Only members who work for the State of Washington are eligible to be nominated for the State of Washington Trustee position. Any member can run for the Membership-at-Large Trustee position. The City of Seattle, King County, City of Portland, and Greater Northwest Trustee positions will be up for election in ensuing years.
- (2) To be eligible for nomination to an Executive Board position, a member must have been in good standing in PROTEC17 for a period of at least six (6) months immediately prior to the nomination.
- (3) No member of PROTEC17 shall run for more than one Executive Board office concurrently.
- (4) Nominations must be in writing by the person making the nomination, and must be at the PROTEC17 office, 2900 Eastlake Avenue East, Suite #300, Seattle, Washington 98102, by 5 p.m. on Thurs., Oct. 5, 2023.
- (5) Names of all nominees, except those who declare in writing that they decline the nomination, will appear on the ballot.
- (6) Candidates may submit a statement of up to 200 words and a photo of themselves. These will go out with the ballot and must be submitted to the union office by 5 p.m. on Wed., Oct. 11, 2023.
- (7) An electronic ballot will be emailed to each member in good standing at their last known email address.
- (8) The ballots will be counted after 5 p.m. on Thurs., Nov. 16, 2023.

To request a paper ballot, or if you have any questions regarding the election, please contact the PROTEC17 Election chair at: PROTEC17 Election Chair, 2900 Eastlake Avenue East, Suite 300, Seattle WA 98102, or union@protec17.org.

insight

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Karen Estevenin
Executive Director

Welcoming in Summer

Summer is here! Like many others living in the PNW, after plenty of rain and grey skies, I welcome this time with open arms. I cherish the light and long days, being outdoors (without a coat!), getting around the Northwest, lying on the lawn, and staying out late. It's a sweet time, a time to seize the moment, and a time to gather.

During these summer days, we also celebrate Pride month, Juneteenth, Fourth of July, and Labor Day. All of these events bring together our family, friends, and communities to recognize and celebrate who we are as people. They honor freedom, and our struggles. They lift-up our collective strength, and they are for everyone. Just like our union.

Our union works this way in no small part because of the ways we welcome everyone in – new members and old hands alike. Washington State Patrol members Paul Austin and Bennet Olsson understand this. As Chapter Officers and Stewards, they recently spent two days traveling the state to personally welcome new members and discuss important issues and ideas with all of their colleagues. You can read more about their road trip and Olsson's CVEO Officer of the Year award on page 7.

In this spirit, we are also thrilled to welcome newly organized workers this summer. Portland's Street Response unit recently celebrated becoming PROTEC17 members (p. 9), and workers at the City of Mount Vernon have also decided to join our union (p. 10)! They are now moving ahead with the next steps of demanding more flexibility at work, better leave benefits, fair treatment, and more.

Ultimately, welcoming our co-workers into our union, and into our work as a union, is what lays the foundation for these kinds of victories. For example, when it became obvious that the City of Tacoma was dead set against providing fair wage increases, the bargaining team mobilized members, co-workers and labor partners. In the end, the City gave out 53 separate wage improvements in a contract that members overwhelmingly approved (p. 5). Members at the City of Seattle are gearing up for a similar fight as the City is still rejecting our demands for strong wages, respect, and workplace improvements (p. 6). You can help your fellow PROTEC17 and Coalition union members by scanning the QR code on the back of this issue to send an email to Mayor Bruce Harrell and the Seattle City Council to support a fair contract.

So while the summer sun provides opportunities for connecting, welcoming, and celebrating, let's embrace this warmth and continue to amplify it within our union. So many of you are doing just that, and I'm honored to be part of it with you.

In compassion and solidarity,

Karen

PROTEC17 Scholarship deadline July 31!



The annual college scholarship program for dependents of PROTEC17 members is open through July 31! Since its inception in 2011, PROTEC17 has awarded more than 20 scholarships totalling over \$60,000 towards the advanced education of our members' children.

The program sponsors two \$3,000 college scholarships each year – one for an incoming college freshman, and the other for a continuing college student. Applicants are asked to demonstrate their academic achievement, community service, extracurricular activities, and educational goals, as well as write a labor-related essay which is reviewed by outside labor educators.

The application is now available on the PROTEC17 website (www.protec17.org/benefits) – the deadline to apply is July 31, 2023. Winners will be announced in the fall issue of *Insight* magazine, and on our website and social media channels.

In their essays, past winners have highlighted how their parent's involvement with PROTEC17 has taught them the value of working together to solve problems, as well as the importance of unions and the broader worker community.

If you are the parent, grandparent or legal guardian of a child heading off or returning to college, please encourage them to apply. If you have any questions about the scholarship program, contact Operations Director Anthony Davidson at anthony@protec17.org. ■

SRHD members working in opioid treatment services win \$4k payment

PROTEC17 members at Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) who work in the Opioid Treatment Program care deeply about their work, and have a lot of compassion and respect for their patients.

This program is one of only a handful of publicly-operated treatment programs for individuals dependent on opioids in Washington State. From Substance Abuse Counselors to Clinical Assistants, treatment services staff have a strong sense of public service and are proud of the positive impact they have on the community. They also worked continuously throughout the pandemic with their clients who relied on this vital program.

When SRHD unexpectedly received funding intended to stabilize the behavioral health workforce, PROTEC17 members stepped up to make sure their voices were heard in the decision-making process.

Members Adam Martin and Dawnya Sanders were the first to alert their Union Representative about the funding. In a meeting with HR, they learned SRHD was considering spending the funds without any employee input, including one idea to build a gym in the basement.

Immediately, the team organized a series of meetings where they gathered feedback on how members thought the funds should be used. Members unanimously agreed that the funds should be directly disbursed to staff, and launched a campaign to urge SRHD to do just that. After hearing their feedback, SRHD agreed to change course and disburse the funds directly to staff to use as they see fit.

Thanks to the quick work of their colleagues, PROTEC17 members in the SRHD Treatment Services program who worked at the time the funding was received will be getting a \$4,000 payment that they can decide how best to use for their own households, rather than their employer unilaterally deciding for them.

"I feel like we have been rewarded for all the hard work we did through the COVID-19 pandemic," said PROTEC17 member and Treatment Counselor, Beth Rogers. "It is a great reward for all of our dedication."

Beyond the immediate financial gain, this win has instilled a new sense of empowerment among members and has proven that standing together can effect positive change in our workplaces. ■



SRHD treatment services members Joey Farris, Beth Rogers, and Debbie DeHaven.

Find more news on our website: www.protec17.org/news

Tacoma members ratify historic agreement with COLA, wage adjustments for 53 classifications, and more

After 14 months of hard work by the PROTEC17 bargaining team and 10 months of active negotiations, we have a new contract with the City of Tacoma.

One of the biggest highlights of this agreement are market adjustments for 53 different job classifications, ranging from four to 20 percent, with half of the increase paid retroactively to January 1, 2023, and the second half added to base wages on January 1, 2024. These increases are in addition to the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA).

Other wins in this contract include: better language allowing employees to adjust their shifts; one-hour minimum overtime language for taking phone calls or texts on stand-by; improved language for application of rate pay for Inspectors; and confined space pay for the Painter Crew Lead.

The process started last February 2022 when we received nominations for eight members to represent their colleagues on the bargaining team. The team is: Devin Andrews, Jay Hemley, Ken Ho, DeJa Irving, Tiffany Ryan, Mike Sowards, Troy Stevens, and Renee Thompson.

The team's first order of business was to put together a survey to send to members to gather and prioritize contract issues. After the data from the survey was compiled, the team worked to compose proposals that reflected members' priorities. They then held meetings to share the results of the survey and to discuss the plan for negotiations.

Bargaining began in July 2022, and started with contract language changes. When it came time to discuss economics, it became clear that the City was interested in a relatively low COLA with a focus on targeted market adjustments for many of our classifications. The team took into consideration that seven contracts with other unions had already settled with COLAs of 2.5% in 2023, 2.75% in 2024



The PROTEC17 Tacoma bargaining team holds their 'Fair Wages Tacoma' placards..

and 2.75% in 2025, and decided to pivot their focus on getting the fairest market adjustment for as many classifications as possible. They brought in more members to compliment their efforts and to tell their stories. These members advocated for market adjustments and were extremely effective. It is fair to say that the increases the team was able to bargain would not have occurred without the efforts of Vince Harteau (Road Use Compliance), John Durrance (Road Use Compliance), Brett Burrows (Source Control), Randy Ketner (Carpenter Lead), Scott Long (WWTP) and Anna Hudson (Permits).

As the months went by and the City refused to budge on some of their positions, the team organized a campaign that encouraged all 250 PROTEC17 members to put up 'Fair Wages Tacoma' signs in their work areas and to use PROTEC17 backgrounds in all their Zoom and Teams meetings. This outpouring of solidarity went a long way in moving the needle with the City.

The team finally reached a tentative agreement on the contract in early May and it was overwhelmingly ratified by members two weeks later. The contract is historic in the amount of market adjustments negotiated and is a testament to the hard work and dedication from the bargaining team. ■

“In the end, we got a fair contract, and the expertise of [our Union Rep], the negotiation team, and union members was critical to achieving that. We spoke up, and the City listened.”

Ken Ho, PROTEC17 Tacoma member and Inspector

Seattle Tennis Professionals and Customer Service Representatives seek major changes in next contract

For Tom Noud and his colleagues at Seattle's Amy Yee Tennis Center (AYTC), tennis is not just a game, it's a philosophy rooted in sportsmanship, respect, and treating people the way you want to be treated. Now, nearly seven years after organizing their unit into PROTEC17, they are mobilizing to ensure that the City of Seattle shows them the respect they deserve in their next contract.

The AYTC, part of Seattle Parks and Recreation, serves hundreds of players a week, year-round at their indoor courts through group classes, private lessons, U.S. Tennis Association matches, and more. And as a busy, bustling place that is popular and well-loved by the community, the center brings in over a million dollars each year. Yet, the five permanent Tennis Professionals, 19 temporary employees, and six Customer Service Representatives who help clients at the front desk, receive wages that fall far below industry standards.

Noud and his fellow Tennis Professional colleague Baraka Brown – both PROTEC17 Stewards and leaders who have been working at the AYTC since 2007 – are advocating to change that. Noud, who was a practicing attorney before pivoting back to his lifelong love of tennis as a vocation, has been researching wages at various tennis centers and clubs, and is finding the City's wages fall short – *by a lot* – at least 50 to 100 percent less per hour.

All of the Tennis Pros have expertise in tennis, coaching, and lesson planning plus years of experience and certifications, making their jobs highly specialized, which is why Noud and Brown are also fighting to have their titles changed from 'Tennis Instructor' to 'Tennis Professional', per industry standards. In addition, the physical exertion, endurance, and potential for occupational injury, make the job hard on their bodies. Noud, himself, is currently on leave recovering from foot surgery.

The AYTC front desk workers, too, who are currently classified as 'Cashiers' are



PROTEC17 members sticking up at the Amy Yee Tennis Center!

doing far more than just taking money, Noud asserts, and are also being paid well below market rate.

"Everyone at Amy Yee is working to build an ongoing, positive experience for our customers at the tennis center, many of whom come in regularly and we build long-lasting relationships with," he said.

But even with all of their skills and passion for their work and clients, employees at the tennis center are finding it hard to make ends meet. Those who live in the city are barely scraping by, others have roommates, and many live in Federal Way, Auburn, Everett, and other areas outside of the city where the cost of living is cheaper. And most Pros work additional hours giving private lessons in the summer months to supplement their income.

"It's demoralizing knowing that the AYTC profits off of the sweat equity of its staff, but refuses to pay us a competitive living wage," said Noud.

Alongside Customer Service Representative Johnny Townsend, Noud and Brown have participated on Labor Management Committees, created internal staff petitions, launched a sticker campaign, and are currently taking an active

role on the contract action team that is supporting negotiations for the next contract in order to push for change. In addition to a pay increase, they are seeking improvements to their working conditions, including their relationship with management and excessive disciplinary actions.

"We've made it our mission to improve our pay and workplace conditions," said Noud, who loves his job, colleagues, and clients, despite the hardships.

"Tennis has been a part of my life since age six," he continued. "I'm still in touch with players and coaches from my youth because they made an indelible imprint on my life. I try to have a similar impact on my students by relaying those same values that have shaped me. It's gratifying to be a part of a student's development, and I've made many lifelong personal relationships in my time at AYTC, too."

If you would like to help support the PROTEC17 members at the AYTC (along with all of our City members who are fighting for a strong contract!), scan the QR code on the back of this issue to send an email to Mayor Bruce Harrell and the Seattle City Council. ■

PROTEC17 leader wins WSP CVEO of the Year

Co-Presidents tour state with challenge coins for CVEO members



Washington State Patrol (WSP) Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Officers (CVEOs), Paul Austin and

Bennett Olsson, weren't too sure about their union at first.

Neither Austin or Olsson had ever been union members, and they didn't see what their union did on a daily basis. Some of their colleagues were supporters and some weren't, but most just didn't know much about the value of having a union. That's when Austin and Olsson decided to be the change they wanted to see and got involved.

First, Austin and Olsson became Union Stewards, and then they joined the 2022 bargaining team that negotiated the 2023-2035 contract. Alongside their fellow state employees from the Department of Licensing (DOL), Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and other WSP departments represented by PROTEC17, they achieved historic wins in language changes, wage adjustments, and premium pay. These changes were largely due to the team's subject matter experts – like Austin



and Olsson – who spoke articulately to the issues they see in their workplace and the best ways to address them.

After bargaining concluded, the two were elected Co-Presidents of the statewide PROTEC17 WSP Chapter and have been making things happen ever since.

Together with the PROTEC17 Communications department, they designed

a challenge coin and used Chapter funds to pay for their production. They also took time off to go on a 1,000+ mile field trip, visiting over 60 CVEOs throughout the State, introducing themselves, answering union-related questions, and handing out challenge coins and informational bookmarks.

One of the things that make these two union leaders stand out is the fact that they are respected by colleagues and management alike. They are often able to resolve issues without involving their union representatives, and they are the go-to for their colleagues with union-related questions and issues.

Recently, Olsson was honored with the 2023 CVEO of the Year award in his division for his dedication to his work at the WSP. And it is no surprise that it is an award that Austin has also held in the past.

Union members often look to their union and ask *'what is the union doing for me?'* These two leaders have flipped that sentiment on its head and ask *'what can I do for my union?'* Indeed, their involvement has made a tangible difference in the daily lives of CVEOs. ■



Top: WSP CVEO Bennett Olsson with PROTEC17 Union Representative Alexis Young after winning CVEO of the Year. Above: Paul Austin (far left) and Bennett Olsson (far right) on their statewide tour. Left: one side of the PROTEC17 WSP challenge coin.

“The trip around the state allowed me the opportunity to grow as our union co-president. This experience also allowed me the opportunity to share my experiences with my fellow members on our union.”

Paul Austin, PROTEC17 member and Co-President of the WSP CVEO Chapter

PROTEC17 celebrates Trans Day of Visibility, International Workers' Day, and more!



In Portland, PROTEC17 members celebrated the adoption of the City's Transgender Day of Visibility proclamation on April 14 alongside their fellow City of Portland employees. Held annually on March 31st, International Transgender Day of Visibility is a day to celebrate the transgender and non-binary community, and to raise awareness about the discrimination that the community faces. PROTEC17 is proud of our trans members, and continues to work towards a world free of discrimination and violence against our trans siblings. ■

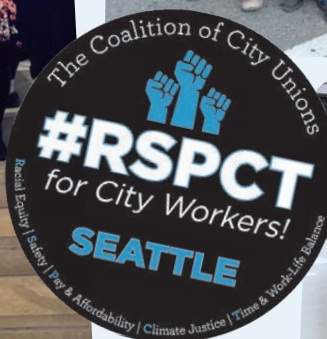


PROTEC17 Steward Jeanette DeCastro (second from left) spoke on a panel on 'Class Struggle Unionism in the Public Sector' at the Labor Notes Conference in Portland in early May! Pictured here with PROTEC17 staff organizer Brenna Stroup, and PROTEC17 Portland leaders Valency Astris and Janet Strahl. ■



PROTEC17 staff, pictured here with King County member Jeremy Ward, joined others at the May Day rally in downtown Seattle! May Day, a.k.a. International Workers' Day, is held annually on May 1, and is historically a day to stand with labor and community partners who champion immigrant and workers' rights. ■

PROTEC17 members fight for strong contracts!



City of Seattle members have been fighting for a fair contract alongside their siblings from 10 other unions in the Coalition of City Unions (CCU) since Sept. 2022. The CCU has held several actions to show the City their strength and solidarity, including unfurling a 50-foot petition with over 6,000 signatures at City Hall on April 18 (above left), and a 'share your union story' event at the Charles Street work location on May 16 (two photos, above right). You can help your fellow PROTEC17 and CCU members by sending an email to Mayor Bruce Harrell and Seattle City Council – details on the back of this issue! ■

PROTEC17 members at Portland Street Response reached an agreement to supplement their PROTEC17 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) that addresses the unique needs of their role as first responders. In addition, four classifications including Peer Support Specialist, Community Health Worker, and Mental Health Crisis Responder I & II moved onto steps and are eligible for overtime, consistent with other Portland members. ■



City of Mount Vernon workers join PROTEC17!

PROTEC17 welcomes our newest members at the City of Mount Vernon (a new employer for us) to our union! This group of 15 employees who work in a variety of professional and technical roles – from permitting, to geographical information systems (GIS), to land use planning – were certified as union members by the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) in May, and celebrated at a gathering on May 31 alongside their PROTEC17 Union Representative Alexis Young, Organizing Director Jessica Olivas, and Executive Director Karen Estevenin.

When asked why they wanted to unionize, our new members cited the common desires for fair pay and better working conditions. But as specialists who really enjoy their work, many seek to achieve a workplace environment that promotes a high level of job satisfaction.

“I wanted more support and bargaining power in my work-life in order to create an environment with high employee satisfaction and low turnover, where everyone is happy and supports each other,” said Alison Lubeck, a GIS Specialist who has worked for the City for three and a half years.

In her work doing location-based mapping, data management, and analysis, Lubeck enjoys the opportunities she has to

“There is strength in pulling together and caring about what happens to all of us, as opposed to just looking out for yourself.”

Marianne Manville-Ailles, PROTEC17 Member and Senior Land Use Planner, City of Mount Vernon



New PROTEC17 members at the City of Mount Vernon celebrate their new union membership.

solve problems creatively, helping save time and money for the City.

For Senior Permit Technician Morgan Morrison, she loves the variety of her work and that it helps keep Mount Vernon residents safe. As for unionizing, after working for the City for nine years, Morrison was tired of watching her union-represented colleagues get wage adjustments and other benefits that weren't available to non-represented employees. She hopes the unit can see a serious wage increase when they negotiate their first contract, that their voices will be heard on other workplace topics, and that they'll have the support that comes with being a part of PROTEC17 and the broader Labor Movement.

Other issues that the team is hoping to address in the new contract include: scheduling flexibility, enhanced leave benefits, workload, and fair and equitable treatment.

Marianne Manville-Ailles is a Senior Land Use Planner with the City who has worked for Mount Vernon for over 17 years – 15 of those as a consultant, and two and a

half as full-time employee. Her job involves processing permits and helping people through the project approval process. For Manville-Ailles, she knows there is strength in numbers.

“There is strength in pulling together and caring about what happens to all of us, as opposed to just looking out for yourself,” she said.

While many of our newest members in Mount Vernon have never been in a union, they realize the importance of sticking together and working together to make change in their workplace and beyond.

“Being in a union makes our communities healthier and stronger,” said Cynthia Rivas, a GIS Administrator.

PROTEC17 is proud to expand our family to include workers at the City of Mount Vernon! Please join us in welcoming them to our union. And if you know other public employees who are looking to form a union in their workplace, please reach out to our Organizing team at join@protec17.org. ■

Know workers who want to organize? Visit: protec17.org/join-us

Impasse in Oregon Legislature; possible special session



While the Oregon legislative session is slated to end on June 25, the legislature - at the time of this writing - has been unable to pass bills for over a month after a historic walk-out that may last until the end of session. If a deal is reached that brings Senate Republicans back, that body will need to focus exclusively on floor sessions to pass previously approved bills. If that does not happen, it could lead to a special session focused on passing critical budget bills.

Beginning in early May, Republican Senators, who hold 12 of 30 seats in the chamber, began skipping floor sessions, thereby denying the Senate the members needed to meet quorum requirements. Oregon remains one of the few states to have a legislative quorum of higher than

fifty percent, instead requiring 20 of 30 members to be present in order to conduct business.

In an attempt to address this issue, Oregon voters enacted Measure 113 in November 2022 which bars legislators who have more than 10 unexcused absences from running for reelection. However, Republicans have chosen to ignore this rule, instead arguing that they will fight the legality of Measure 113 in court over the next year.

Because of this tactic, the bulk of bills that PROTEC17 has been tracking and supporting through the 2023 session are now stalled. This includes electronic authorization cards for new union organizing (HB 2573), bringing Oregon OSHA penalties in line with federal standards (SB 592), and improving school ventilation stand-

ards (HB 3031) along with many, many other important pieces of legislation.

If there is a political breakthrough before the end of session, there will be a rush to pass as many of these bills as possible, but because of the time crunch, some bills may be cut that otherwise would have become law. This will likely lead to significant competition between policy areas, and Labor will be urging leadership to prioritize workers' rights and safety at this critical time.

If you would like more information about the Oregon legislative session or PROTEC17's work to support workers in Oregon, please visit the PROTEC17 Political Action webpage at protec17.org/political-action, or contact PROTEC17's Oregon Legislative Advocate Elliot Levin at elliott@protec17.org. ■

Get involved on the Political Action Committee!

There are a number of important local races in the 2023 election cycle, and PROTEC17 members are encouraged to get involved via our Political Action Committee (PAC)! You can sit on an endorsement committee to interview worker-friendly and union-friendly candidates, help get out the vote for a candidate that we've endorsed, or simply donate to our PAC fund. As a reminder, NO DUES are ever used to fund political candidates - only voluntary donations to the PAC are used for this purpose.

To learn more about our political program visit: protec17.org/political-action, or reach out to PROTEC17 Political Director Brandon Hersey at brandon@protec17.org. ■



PROTEC17 Executive Board Trustee Jennell Hicks (left) and PROTEC17 Executive Director Karen Estevenin (right) with current Seattle City Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda, who is running for King County Council this fall.

To donate to the PAC, visit:
protec17.org/PAC



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Your PROTEC17 siblings at the City of Seattle need your support!

Over 6,000 City of Seattle employees – representing 11 unions, including PROTEC17 – have been negotiating since September 2022, and working under an expired contract since December 2022. Despite historic inflation and costs that are pricing most union members out of Seattle, the City has proposed an insulting 1% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), and has not moved since March 2023.

Show your solidarity! Scan the QR code to send a pre-written email to Mayor Bruce Harrell and Seattle City Councilmembers to support a fair contract for your union siblings!



If you are a PROTEC17 Seattle member who hasn't yet shared your own story with the Mayor and City Council, you can find your email template at: tinyurl.com/RSPCTEmailMay2023