

insight

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS & FRIENDS

OF PROTEC17

Fall
2026
Vol 31
No. 4





On the Cover:

PROTEC17 members joined other State employee unions in Olympia on Sept. 5 to demand a fair contract. The State initially proposed a 0% wage adjustment for both years of the 2027-2029 contract, but union negotiators were able to bargain a mandatory wage reopener for 2028-2029. State members ratified the tentative agreement on Sept. 29. Read more on page 5. ■

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insight

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We Won't Back Down



Within the last 24 hours, as I write this column, I've mapped out impasse and strike timelines with our Portland staff and legal counsel, strategized a mobilization plan for the State contract vote with our lead negotiator, and advocated alongside the Sound Transit bargaining team members and staff in mediation that went until the early hours of the morning. Three different fights, but one common element – “*We Won't Back Down*,” the theme of this issue of *Insight*, and of the upcoming PROTEC17 Regional Executive Committee meeting in late October.

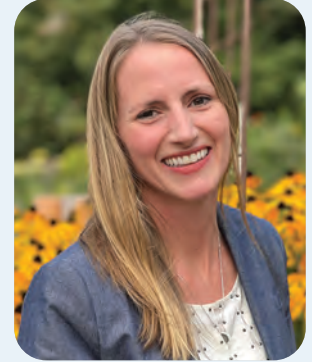
Moments like these stay with me because each one is a choice: to stand up tall, push forward, and create real change. They are big and meaningful because they are collective efforts and the results will reach a great many people – hopefully in good and lasting ways.

On the cover, members of the State bargaining team rallied in front of the Washington State capitol for a fair contract, an action that helped move the dial from the State's initial offer of 0% COLA for entirety of the 2027-2029 biennium (p. 5). City of Portland members have been building solidarity with their union siblings and community partners in actions throughout the summer in preparation for a possible strike over living wages and improved flexibility (p. 6-7). Sound Transit workers and their newly organized colleagues have been bringing their fight for a first union contract to Board meetings and ribbon cutting ceremonies for over 18 months (p. 4). We also have endorsed many outstanding candidates for public office (p. 12) who we will hold to their promise of not backing down.

This issue highlights just a few of the many, many ways PROTEC17 members are choosing to not back down. It's not an easy choice. Nearly everyone I'm talking to these days is feeling some mix of alarm, pressure, and distress. Maybe it's the overwhelm of the world right now, politically, environmentally, economically. Maybe it's the constant intake of information coupled with crises that never seem to end. Either way, stepping back or away is completely understandable. (*And just to note, in order to sustain ourselves and our movement, rest is needed - we all need breaks!*) But choosing to stand up and step forward when times are tough is remarkable.

The road ahead will not be easy – and no one in our union ever expected it to be. But we are not walking it alone. Every rally, every vote, every late night at the bargaining table, is proof that when we stay organized, informed, and committed to one another, we can create powerful change. This issue is a snapshot of that work, and of the members who are carrying it forward. And to the many members whose work isn't featured in these pages – thank you. Your commitment, whether visible or behind the scenes, is the foundation of everything we accomplish. I look forward to continuing the work with all of you.

In compassion and solidarity,



Karen Estevenin
Executive Director

Seattle Coalition considers contract extension, still prepares to negotiate

With the PROTEC17 City of Seattle contract set to expire at the end of the year, the Coalition of City Unions (CCU) started to gear up for bargaining the next contract this summer by assessing and aligning our shared priorities. PROTEC17 has worked in solidarity with other unions of the CCU during the last several contract cycles, and together, we have won strong union wages and improved issues for workers across the City.

In September, City negotiators, under new Mayor Katie Wilson, put a one-year contract extension on the table that includes a wage increase for 2027. In response, the CCU delivered a strong counter-proposal to increase the wage offer, add critical fixes needed ahead of full contract bargaining, and to call for an early kick off to negotiations next year. As this issue of *Insight* went to print, the City and the CCU are still in active negotiations on a possible extension agreement.

Meanwhile, unions are still planning as if headed into a normal contract negotiation cycle. Bargaining dates are already on hold, and Contract Action Team (CAT) meetings are being scheduled for October for member leaders and those who want to get involved and support their union contract.

If a strong extension deal is reached, it will go before members for a vote. If no deal is reached, Seattle members will hear more about regular contract negotiations soon. PROTEC17 Seattle members should check their personal email for the latest updates, and attend the monthly Chapter meetings, held virtually on the second Thursday of the month. ■

Sound Transit members still fighting for a first contract after more than 18 months



On September 30, Sound Transit members shared a petition with the public to support a fair contract at the opening of the new Pinehurst light rail station at NE 130th in Seattle.

For more than 18 months, PROTEC17 has been bargaining with Sound Transit to establish a first contract for exempt workers, and to integrate newly certified groups into an existing non-exempt collective bargaining agreement alongside PROTEC17 Passenger Information Coordinators (PICs).

PICs first organized with PROTEC17 in 2024, and ratified the first PROTEC17 contract with the agency in 2025. But Sound Transit employees who've joined PROTEC17 since that time have been faced with numerous challenges and bad faith bargaining from the agency.

In March, merit raises were withheld from unionizing workers while non-union staff received their raises. PROTEC17-represented employees are also being mandated to return to office (RTO) despite the fact that an agreement has not been reached on this issue, which has been a priority in negotiations. In addition, unionizing workers have also been facing

retaliation for organizing and participating in union activity. PROTEC17 has filed multiple unfair labor practice (ULPs) complaints against the agency.

This fall, members are showing their solidarity and stepping up their actions to show the agency that they are not backing down. In September, members launched Union Pride Day, where they don their union swag in a show of unity. They also have an ongoing presence at Sound Transit Board meetings where some members give public testimony, and others fill the public chamber and hold their placards demanding a 'fair contract now'. Their priority issues are fair pay; for agency leadership to honor their commitments on remote work; and to prioritize in-house staffing and minimize the use of more expensive contractors.

PROTEC17 members and the public can show support for our Sound Transit siblings by signing the petition here: actionnetwork.org/petitions/transit-riders-4-transit-workers. ■

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

State members ratify 2027-2029 contract

Agreement includes wage reopener in 2028

The PROTEC17 State negotiating team reached a tentative agreement on Sept. 17 on the 2027-2029 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) after months of frustrating negotiations with the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and state agency leadership. Members from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Department of Licensing (DOL), and the Washington State Patrol (WSP) voted to ratify the agreement just ahead of the State-mandated Oct. 1 deadline.

While wage adjustments were the main sticking point in this negotiations - with the State unwilling to move off of a 0% increase for PROTEC17 and other unions in 2027 - the team was able to negotiate wage reopener language, which could allow for an increase in the 2028-2029 fiscal year. In addition, a number of important language improvements were made including:

- Two additional personal holidays;
- Stronger telework protections;
- Protection from AI in the workplace
- Additional comp time for our Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Officers (CVEOs) at the WSP;
- Leave improvements for DOL Licensing Service Reps (LSRs);
- Expanded Shared Leave;
- More time with new employees at New Employee Orientations;
- Access to State email to communicate directly with members on State resources;
- Establishment of better rest time provisions for CVEOs.

In one of the most difficult negotiations in recent years, State unions coordinated on a number of solidarity actions in order to move the dial, including a lunch break walkout organized by the largest state union - Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE) - on Aug. 31

(pictured below), and a rally at the Capitol in Olympia on Sept. 5 (pictured on the cover). Thank you to all of the PROTEC17 members who participated.

Moving forward, we are taking steps to move legislation in Olympia to put us in a better bargaining position in subsequent years, and will fight to ensure new taxes remain in place in the face of ballot measures that intend to dismantle those valuable sources of revenue - again putting us in a better position to fight for greater economic wins in the future.

A huge thank you to the member leaders on the bargaining team, who do much of this work on their personal time, demonstrating incredible commitment and dedication to their coworkers and communities. To view the new contract, visit: protec17.org/members. If you have any questions about the new contract, please reach out to your Steward, Bargaining Team, or Union Representative. ■



Members at the DOL office in Everett pose with their signs during the lunch break walkout on Aug. 31.

“In my 13 years negotiating for State members, this was by far the most challenging bargaining environment to date. However, we were able to stave off increases to healthcare, secured strong language related to AI, and will be able to go back to the table to negotiate wage increases for 2028-2029.”

Sarah Lorenzini, Union Representative and Lead Negotiator, PROTEC17

Portland members reach TA; avoid possible strike

Rallies, petitions, and solidarity actions helped keep up the pressure

For the first time in institutional memory, the PROTEC17 Portland Chapter failed to reach a tentative agreement with the City of Portland during regular bargaining and moved to mediation with a neutral third party after more than 18 months of frustrating negotiations.

Earlier this year, Portland Mayor Keith Wilson decided the City would unilaterally move away from their decades-long practice of having a citywide standard for a cost of living adjustment (COLA) that is directly tied to an inflationary index. Wilson's decision was made with no warning and after the PROTEC17 bargaining team had already been negotiating with the City for eight months. The mayor, who aligns himself with business interests, chose to take this stance despite rising inflation and city salaries lagging more and more behind, even when the bargaining team did not propose a wage increase above COLA, except for in a small number of classifications that are well below market.

During bargaining, City administration also decided not to honor the commitment

they made to our bargaining unit when we agreed to a Classification and Compensation study instead of a general wage increase in 2017. Nine years later - and 27 since our last full classification review and update - Mayor Wilson decided that any market adjustments from the study would need to come out of members' COLA.

The PROTEC17 team was frustrated that time and again, the Mayor failed to recognize that keeping wages in line with the regional market helps support employee retention and keeps the City an employer of choice.

In response, PROTEC17 members turned up the heat! In late winter, after 10 months of negotiations, the contract action team started a button and virtual background campaign, hosting events throughout the City to distribute them. This was followed by the delivery of a petition to the Mayor and City Council in the spring signed by more than 70% of Portland members, and testimony at City Council.

Summer saw a growing union visibility campaign, with Worker Wednesdays

(see photos on next page) and joint union actions with our Labor siblings, CPPW and LiUNA 483, who were in their own similar contract fights with the City. One action was a Renaissance Faire themed rally, complete with costumes, face painting, union crests, and a miniature horse. The three unions also hosted a high-visibility rally outside of City Hall on Sept. 16 which made a big impact on the City Council meeting inside.

After reaching impasse with the City in mediation in September, PROTEC17 members were gearing up for a possible strike this November. But late in the evening on Sept. 30, the bargaining team reached a tentative agreement that retains the COLA formula, introduces longevity pay, and secures many other strong wins that the team has been fighting for.

Portland members will be voting on the agreement in October. PROTEC17 Portland members should check their personal email to learn more about the latest updates and info sessions, and to view the redlined agreement and cast their ballot. ■

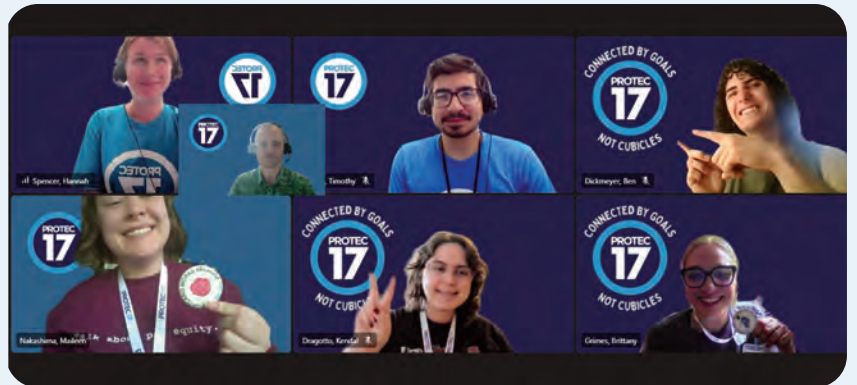
“For most of my 25 years in this union, a member could pay their dues and sit back and enjoy the negotiated benefits of representation. Not this year. This was the year all members needed to show up to get a decent contract – and we did.”

Janet Tucker
Senior Civil Engineering Associate
City of Portland



Union members from PROTEC17, CPPW, and LiUNA 483 at a rally at City Hall on Sept. 16.

GALLERY



See more at: protec17.org/member/portland

Congrats to our 2026 PROTEC17 scholarship winners!

Since it's founding in 2011, the PROTEC17 scholarship program has awarded \$92,000 in awards to help members'

dependents in their pursuit of a higher education. We are proud to announce that our 2026 scholarship winners are Elsa Enger and Hazel Lily Abrahamson-Amerine.

Each year, the PROTEC17 scholarship is open to the children, grandchildren or dependents of members as they enter or continue their studies in college or technical school. The award amount is \$5,000 for each of the two scholarships – one for an incoming freshman, and one for a continuing college student.

Scholarship applications were accepted through July 31. In the application, students are asked to demonstrate their academic achievements, educational goals, and extra-curricular activities. In addition, applicants submit letters of recommendation and a labor-related essay.

Student essays were evaluated – anonymously to reduce bias – by the PROTEC17 Executive Board. The Board found reading all of the essays very inspiring and rewarding, but a couple of students rose to the top.

Elsa Enger is the child of Snohomish County member Aran Enger, and is our graduating high school student winner. She started at San Diego State University this fall to pursue a degree in Liberal Studies, with dreams to become an elementary school teacher.

In her scholarship application, Enger reflected on her passion for teaching, as well as her supportive family – especially her father, whose union membership demonstrated the importance of compassion, service, and support for others.

"Because of my dad's PROTEC17 membership, I grew up with stability, opportunity, and parents who could truly be present in my life," said Enger in her essay. "Those experiences have shaped the person I am today and inspired me to value community, kindness, and service to others. As I pursue my goal of becoming an elementary school



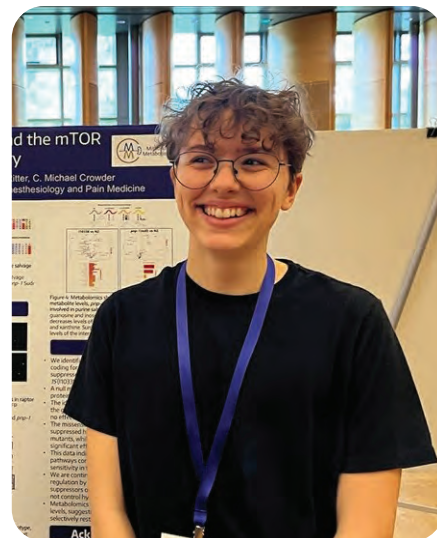
"I have always wanted to work with kids and make a positive impact on their lives. Getting my degree will give me the knowledge and experience I need to become the kind of teacher I want to be."

Elsa Enger, child of Snohomish County member Aran Enger (both pictured), *San Diego State University*

teacher, I know that being part of a union will be an important part of my career."

Hazel Lily Abrahamson-Amerine, child of City of Seattle member Michael Abrahamson, is entering their senior year at the University of Washington this fall, where they are finishing their degree in biochemistry with a minor in environmental studies. They will be applying to graduate schools this fall to continue their studies in environmental biochemistry with the hopes of tackling climate change impacts on marine life and ecosystems.

"I grew up in the Puget Sound region and am deeply impacted by the culture and



"This fall, I will be applying to PhD programs in biological oceanography... This scholarship provides crucial support to finish my undergraduate degree strong and prepare for graduate school."

Hazel Lily Abrahamson-Amerine, child of City of Seattle member Michael Abrahamson, *University of Washington*

economy of this region. I want to use my education to protect waterways like this, and the people and organisms they sustain around the globe," said Abrahamson-Amerine said in their application.

Both students expressed their gratitude to PROTEC17 for supporting this award and for helping them and their families ease the financial burden of a college education.

Many thanks to the Board for their continued support and participation in this program. And to all of our applicants and our two winners – best of luck this school year and beyond! ■

PROTEC17 EVENT CALENDAR

OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Oct. 6: PROTEC17 Presents - Union 101!

Oct. 6: Portland Chapter Meeting

Oct. 7: Steward Training - Part 1

Oct. 8: Seattle Chapter Meeting

Oct. 12: Indigenous Peoples' Day

Oct. 14: Steward Training - Part 2

Oct. 14: WSDOT Chapter Meeting

Oct. 14: Tacoma Chapter Meeting

Oct. 14: PWR! Member Mixer

Oct. 15: King County Steward Meeting

Oct. 15: Sound Transit Chapter Meeting

Oct. 15: Snohomish County Chapter Meeting

Oct. 21: Portland - Make Some Noise Rally

Oct. 22: Seattle Steward Meeting

Oct. 28: King County Chapter Meeting

NOVEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Nov. 3: Portland Chapter Meeting

Nov. 3: WA DOL Revenue Auditors Meeting

Nov. 4: Steward Training - Part 1

Nov. 11: Veterans Day

Nov. 11: Steward Training - Part 2

Nov. 11: WSDOT Chapter Meeting

Nov. 11: Tacoma Chapter Meeting

Nov. 12: Seattle Chapter Meeting

Nov. 18: Steward Training: Deep Dive on Grievances

Nov. 18: Portland Chapter Meeting

Nov. 19: King County Steward Meeting

Nov. 19: Sound Transit Chapter Meeting

Nov. 25: King County Chapter Meeting

Nov. 26: National Day of Mourning/Thanksgiving Day

DECEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Dec. 1: Portland Chapter Meeting

Dec. 9: WSDOT Chapter Meeting

Dec. 9: Tacoma Chapter Meeting

Dec. 10: Seattle Chapter Meeting

Dec. 10: Skagit County Chapter Meeting

Dec. 16: Portland Chapter Meeting

Dec. 17: King County Steward Meeting

Dec. 17: Sound Transit Chapter Meeting

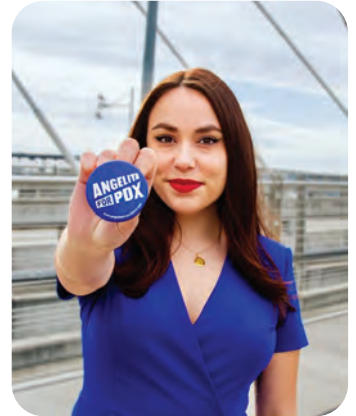
Dec. 17: Snohomish County Chapter Meeting

Dec. 25: Christmas Day

Dec. 31: New Year's Eve

This is not an exhaustive list — things may get rescheduled, added, or canceled — especially with the holiday season. Please visit protec17.org/events/ for current listings.

Portland members endorse four candidates for City Council



PROTEC17-endorsed candidates for Portland City Council (left to right): Jamey Evenstar, Mitch Green, Tiffany Koyama Lane, and Angelita Morillo.

The PROTEC17 Portland Candidate Interview Committee is excited to announce four endorsements for Portland City Council ahead of the deadline for the November 2026 ballot -- Jamey Evenstar, Mitch Green, Tiffany Koyama Lane, and Angelita Morillo.

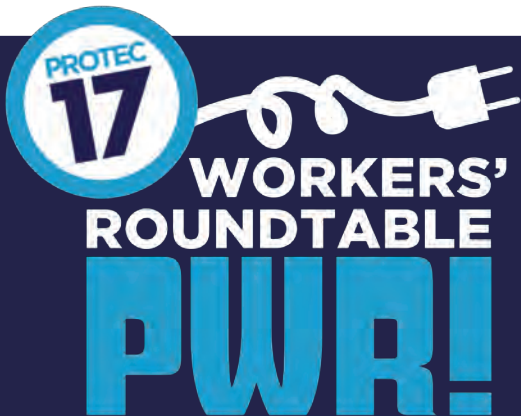
In total, the committee interviewed 12 candidates who are running for City Council this fall. Endorsement decisions were made based on those interviews and other publicly available information about the candidates.

As we are a union representing public workers at the City of Portland, endorsements are largely driven by how consistently candidates will show up for PROTEC17 members in their policies and their votes. While the City Council no longer has direct control over the work of City employees, they are ultimately the body that approves the budget itself and budget-related items, like labor contracts. Therefore, a council that supports Labor is critical.

As a reminder, PROTEC17 does not use dues money to make financial contributions to candidates. If you would like to show

your support for these candidates, please consider donating or volunteering directly with their respective campaigns, which you can find on the PROTEC17 Endorsements webpage at: protec17.org/endorsements.

Thank you to the interview committee, which spent many hours of volunteer time to come to these decisions. We look forward to building the future of Portland with a strong and independent City Council. If you want to join the next candidate interview committee, please contact PROTEC17 Research Director and Legislative Advocate Elliot Levin at elliott@protec17.org. ■



We are a group of PROTEC17 members from across WA and OR who help make political change - and we have fun doing it! Visit our website or contact our Interim Political Lead Joaquin Uy at joaquin@protec17.org or 206-328-7321 ext. 133 to get plugged in!



protec17.org/pwr

Your *VOTE* is your *VOICE*!

VOTE by Nov. 3!

2026 WA Endorsements

As a reminder, dues are NEVER used to support political candidates - only voluntary contributions to our political fund are used for this. Learn more at: protec17.org/PAC

STATE LEGISLATURE

28th Legislative District
Mari Leavitt, Rep. Pos. 1

29th Legislative District
Sharlett Mena, Rep. Pos. 2

32nd Legislative District
Cindy Ryu, Senator
Danica Noble, Rep. Pos. 1

34th Legislative District
Emily Alvarado, Senator
Brianna Thomas, Rep. Pos. 1
Joe Fitzgibbon, Rep. Pos. 2

36th Legislative District
Noel Frame, Senator
Julia Reed, Rep. Pos. 1
Liz Berry, Rep. Pos. 2

37th Legislative District
Chipalo Street, Senator
Kelabe Tewolde and **Sharon Tomiko Santos**, Dual Endorsement, Rep. Pos. 1
Jaelynn Scott, Rep. Pos. 2

43rd Legislative District
Jamie Pedersen, Senator
Nicole Macri, Rep. Pos. 1

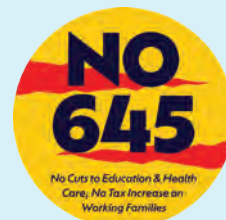
46th Legislative District
Javier Valdez, Senator
Will Dreher and **Gerry Pollet**, Dual Endorsement - Rep. Pos. 1

STATEWIDE BALLOT MEASURES

NO HATE IN WA STATE

Vote No on I-001 & I-638

Vote NO on Initiatives I-001 and I-638 - both anti-LGBTQ+ measures threaten children's safety, invade student privacy, and roll back essential protections for vulnerable youth. Vote NO on I-645, which repeals the tax on millionaires and imposes taxes on working families.



PIERCE COUNTY



KEEP PIERCE MOVING

VOTE YES on PROP 1 • NOV. 2026

YES on Prop 1
Keep Pierce Moving
Transportation Measure

For more pro-worker recommendations, visit the endorsement page of our Labor partner, the Washington State Labor Council at: wslc.org/vote

CITY OF SEATTLE



City Council
Position 5
Nilu Jenks



Municipal Court
Judge, Pos. 5
Gabe Rothstein



YES on Prop 1
Hop on Board Seattle
Transportation Measure

PROTEC17 MEMBER!



Assessor
Rob Foxcurran



King County Council Dist. 2
Rebecca Saldana



King County Council Dist. 4
Jorge Baron



King County Council Dist. 6
Claudia Balducci



King County Council Dist. 8
Teresa Mosqueda

KING COUNTY

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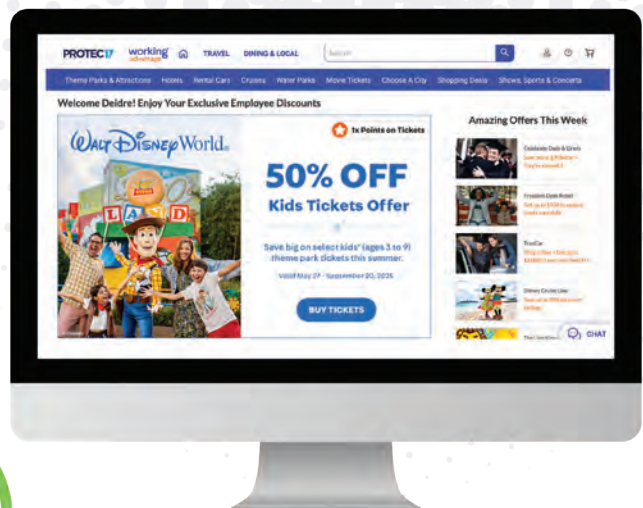
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for you!**



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workingadvantage.com

Use access code: **PROTEC17**