

OCSEA members VOTE to accept

new three-year contract

More than 60 percent of OCSEA members came out to vote on the proposed contract that will commence April 16 and run through February 2012. Of those voting, a clear majority voted “yes” to accept the fact finder’s recommendation and tentative agreements that had been previously agreed upon.

During this trying round of bargaining, the union fought off the state’s most damaging proposals that would have included up to a 6 percent cut in base pay and a shorter work-week, but was forced to make some concessions to avoid a full

blown fact finding hearing that could have resulted in massive takeaways.

“This was a no-win situation for us,” said OCSEA Executive Director and Chief Negotiator Andy Douglas. “Obviously, this contract was not the outcome we were seeking. However, given the economic climate and the state’s budget, this union did the best it could to ensure damage to our members was limited. Given what is happening in most other states, the result could have been much worse.”

According to the fact finder’s report, most OCSEA bargain-

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—Eddie L. Parks,
OCSEA President



OCSEA Pres. Eddie L. Parks speaks before union members at a regional contract meeting.

ing unit members will take 10 “cost-savings days” off without pay per year for two years. Employees working in 24/7 operations will lose 10 paid holidays per year. However, during the contract’s third year, employees will receive a 32-hour bonus check as well as 32 hours of additional sick leave.

“We were faced with many unrealistic options that would have been completely out of our control. We decided to take the route that enabled our members to have the most input and flexibility,” said Douglas (See page 10 on cost-savings days).

During negotiations, daily

headlines showed that states’ revenues were sharply down and most government employees were being asked or required to take mandatory furloughs. “In an economic climate where tens of thousands of Ohioans have lost their jobs, and unions in other states were making large concessions, we were in a tough spot,” said Douglas.

“We understand the difficulty our members had in voting up a concessionary contract,” said OCSEA President Eddie L. Parks. “I think the vote reflects the understanding our dedicated members have of the state’s dire financial situation.”



A large crowd of OCSEA members came out for the Cambridge regional contract meeting to learn about the proposed agreement.



STATE BY STATE

Info as of April 3, 2009



During a meeting for leaders held at OCSEA, Board of Director's member Debra Honore gets information on the tentative contract agreement to take back to the members in her district, assembly and chapter.

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| California | 200,000 employees furloughed 1 or 2 days/month |
| Maryland | 5 days unpaid leave for all employees by June |
| Oregon | Furloughed 24 days over the next two years |
| Nevada | Paycuts, decreased cost-of-living allowance |
| New York | 9,000 layoffs threatened, no raises for one year |
| Illinois | Closing of state parks |
| Vermont | 5% paycuts proposed, or else cut 320 jobs |
| Michigan | Freeze on raises for two years, closing state prisons |
| Arizona | Closing three state parks, unpaid leave |
| Penn. | Rolling furloughs for state employees |
| Virginia | Closing of state prisons, raises postponed |
| Missouri | Shrinking state workforce of 60,000 by 1,300 |
| Minnesota | 24 furlough days each year for two years proposed |
| Georgia | 25,000 out of 100,000 furloughed |
| New Jersey | Layoffs or 14 furlough days by June 30, 2010 |
| Puerto Rico | Laying off 24% of the government's employees |



Members in Toledo listen to a presentation on the proposed contract.

Despite the slide of the economy, the union was able to hold the line on the cost of many health care components and was able to negotiate several improvements including full-coverage for insulin and the elimination of co-pays for health screenings and wellness visits. "Our share of the health care premium will remain unchanged, current co-pays for prescription drugs will be frozen for the life of the con-

tract, the mandatory mail in drug program will be eliminated and a retail 90-day maintenance drug program will be established," said Parks.

Other improvements in the contract include improved travel and mileage reimbursements, the elimination of disciplinary fines, increased sick leave benefit for out-patient surgery and improved benefits for those employees injured on the job. ■

How do OCSEA state employees measure up?

Collective bargaining gives OCSEA members a voice in the workplace and puts them a cut above the rest when it comes to salaries statewide.

Average annual compensation of OCSEA employees statewide



\$45,552.00

Average annual income of all Ohio citizens:



\$33,732.64

Disparity between OCSEA employee statewide and average Ohio employee:



= \$11,819.36