

CWA LOCAL 7800 PRESIDENT'S REPORT FEBRUARY 2009

Submitted by Michael Lynch

After the membership meeting on the 13th, the bomb shell dropped with the announcement of the closing of CFS in Seattle. The CFS's last day here in Seattle is April 15, 2009. For those who wish to follow their jobs, there are openings in four states, Phoenix, AZ has 10 positions, Boise, ID has 97 positions, Des Moines, IA has 43 positions and Salt Lake City, UT has 70 positions. The hardest part of closure is that the Credit Consultant Title is under review. They are trying to compare jobs with ATT, Sprint, and Comcast to the same like work that the credit consultants do. They are saying that Qwest pay scale is too high and want to downgrade the pay scales. The amounts are a lot lower, but we don't have the actual amounts yet. At the new centers they will be doing both Sales and Collections, which mean you would go from one objective to two. Basically more work, at less pay. The announcement of the closure was made January 15th and members had to make a decision by January 30th if they wanted to follow their work, even with a lot of unknowns, such as pay scales and job titles. With report dates as soon as March 9th...what a spirit of service. There are 216 members affected by this closure. So far, only about 43 to 45 people have showed an interest to follow their work. For those that are not leaving to follow their jobs there are resources being supplied for by the King County Labor Council Rapid Response Team and the Puget Sound Community and Technical Colleges Workers Retraining program. Contacts will be at Bell Plaza in March to assist in retraining and a representative from the Unemployment Office will also be at Bell Plaza, with information for filing unemployment benefits. In addition there will be a Pathways fair in March and we will also keep you posted with dates and times, they all will be held in Bell Plaza.

The Nettworth Financial Group will be hosting a Retirement Benefits informational meeting, date to be announced. Also there are 14 Clerical Tech Jobs and 11 Clerical Non-Tech Jobs that the company has initiated a job analysis on. It started January 19, 2009 and based on current schedule, it is anticipated to be completed by the end of March 2009.

The AVP's, Craig Dameron, Stan Wylie and I went to new officers training in January in Portland and there was much to learn. They covered items for the Local, District and National. During this training, Local 7800 attendees met and put together some goals and objectives that we want to achieve this year. As a Local, we will be working toward those goals. I will include them in my March report. It's going to be a bigger challenge now though; with the loss of our members in CFS it has dealt a blow to our Local core. The reason being is these members make up a large half of our committees, committee chairs and several are stewards as well as AVP's. With just starting this job it's really hard to see all these people we are losing.

There are changes in AVP responsibility because of the closure. Dean Sparks will have the CFS till he leaves and Kathy Barker will have the LRAC/LPC. The new areas of responsibility will be posted on all union boards as will the AVP names and phone numbers by March 1st. After the closure we will not be back filling Dean Sparks position, due to the amount of loss of members.

Stan and I met with Gary Rose and Jim Wilson from United Way. They gave the goals and direction United Way has planned for this year. There's going to be a big need for volunteers with all the functions they have planned. I will let you know as they send information to the Local. We also discussed how the company is forcing members to go to United Way meetings and in return is really having a negative impact on people and the organization. They stated they would check into it as they said they were unaware of the issue. I later found out they were aware of it all this time. I left them a message but have not heard back from them yet.

Craig Dameron and Paul Green will be handling MV-Transportation in Redmond. We have over 400 drivers that we represent out there. We are working on being more present and involved with those members and plan to have an open house in Redmond to get more members involved in the Locals committee's and activities.

I will be meeting with all the committee chairs next week. There are four committee's needing chairs, they are: By-laws, Equity, Web Site and the Women's Committee. If you know of anyone or if you are interested, please let me know as soon as possible.

Last, it was great day on January 19th. The Equity Committee, Community Services Committee and many of their family members attended the MLK-Day celebration, in which included work shops, a huge rally and a march (which Seattle has one of the largest in the country). The speakers were great; there was good singing and the march was wonderful. It was a beautiful day out and perfect weather to do a march. January 20th, was of the most touching days of my life. To see Barack Obama sworn in as the 44th President of the United States was moving. I never thought I would ever see this in my life time. As it is said, we have not yet begun to fight with the state of our country. He did not make this mess but it's there for him to clean up.