

MCEA NEWS *Extra*

September 2005

Maryland Classified Employees Association

2005 CONVENTION UPDATE

Delegates elected new officers, adopted a budget, and conducted other business at MCEA's annual Convention, held Sept. 19-20-21 in Ocean City. A summary of action taken follows.

MCEA holds the line on union dues

There will be NO dues increase for 2006. Dues for active-employee members will remain at \$9.00 per bi-weekly pay and dues for retiree members will remain at \$2.70 per month. Unlike other unions, MCEA delegates make that decision. Delegates approved a \$1.84 million operating budget for next year.

MCEA under new leadership

Four officers and four at-large Board of Directors members were elected to 2-year terms that expire in 2007. This year's elections were among the most competitive in MCEA history.

The newly elected Officers are:

- Allen Evans, President, Charles County Health Department. Evans won out of a field of four.
- Marilyn Miller, 1st Vice President, Charles County Parole and Probation
- Sandy Ratke, 2nd Vice President, University System of Maryland
- Cheyenne Scarborough, Treasurer, Holly Center
- Russell Fisher, Secretary, Maryland Department of Education

Elected from a field of nine board candidates are:

- Kenneth Beach, Baltimore City Department of Social Services
- Dennis Gross, Department of Human Resources
- Lark Pugh, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation
- David Stewart, Prince George's County Department of Social Services

Members' contributions recognized

MCEA Member of the Year:

Marilyn Miller, MCEA Secretary (2004-05), Chair of Legislative and Membership committees, member of Convention and WAGE committees, Area III Secretary.

Area Members of the Year:

- Area I - Linda Day, Board of Directors member, BCDSS Chapter 45 president, Chair of MCEA's Coalition for Affordable Health Care Costs
- Area II - Will be selected at a later date
- Area III - Agnes Valenzia, MCEA Treasurer (2003-05), president MVA Chapter 22
- Area IV - John Reamy, president, Chapter 88, Roxbury Correctional Institution
- Area V - Joseph Colburn Jr., president, Chapter 168, Eastern Correctional Institution Officers

Area Governor of the Year:

- Russell Kinnamon, Governor of Area V, Eastern Shore

Bylaws amended with dues requirement

Delegates adopted a bylaws proposal to require that members who win their termination cases pay their union dues for the period they were out of work.

The new paragraph added to Article XIII-Revenues, Section 1-Determination of Dues is: A member successfully represented by MCEA in a termination case shall reimburse the Association the dues for the period of time the member was separated from his/her position.

For the complete MCEA Bylaws, go to www.mcea.org/member/bylaws.html.

Other motions:

- That the promise at the 2003 Convention to return the monies saved by reducing the rebates from 10 percent to 6 percent and money which was contributing first-quarter rebates would be return to chapter if MCEA regained the money. Original motion submitted by Chapter 152. TABLED.
- To make a request to the Board of Directors that the current Interim Executive Director be hired, full time, as the Executive Director of MCEA at a salary that would be within the limits of what is proposed in the budget. Motion submitted by Carol Kelly-Nesbitt, Chapter 68. VOTE 85 FOR, 63 AGAINST.
- To change the name of Executive Director in the Bylaws to Business Manager effective Sine Die 2005 Convention. Motion submitted by Russell Fisher, Chapter 54. FAILED.

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MCEA ... Our Most Important Job Is Yours!

Convention guest speakers

- * The Rev. P.M. Smith, Huber Memorial Church, stressed the importance of effective leadership. "We get the leadership we deserve when we settle for the leadership we get. That must change, but that won't change until we change," he said.
- Terry Lierman, Maryland Democratic Party Chairman, said the state has diminished education and health care. He also stated that "You won't have a Democratic Governor increasing your [prescription drug] co-pays."
- Aris Melissaratos, Department of Business and Economic Development, spoke on Maryland's business initiatives.
- Andrea Fulton, Executive Director, Office of Personnel Services and Benefits, gave an update on the FY2006 health insurance program. When asked about a pay raise for FY2007, she responded that she has not received any information on raises.

OTHER NEWS

Gas mileage reimbursement 48 cents

Effective Sept. 21, Governor Ehrlich increased the gas reimbursement rate increased from 40 cents to 48 cents per mile for eligible State workers. Andrea Fulton of the Office of Personnel Services and Benefits, announced the change at MCEA's Convention on Sept. 21 in Ocean City.

Legislators, employees turn out for MCEA health care coalition meeting

More than 150 State workers and retirees turned out for MCEA's meeting on problems with the prescription drug program, held Sept. 8 at the State Office Building in Baltimore. The Association's Coalition for Affordable Health Care Costs, chaired by Board of Directors member Linda Day, organized the meeting.

Employees told heart-wrenching stories of how the high cost has impacted them and their families.

MCEA is calling for some of the state's \$1.2 billion surplus to be used to lower health care costs, particularly prescription drug co-pays, which effective July 1 are now \$5, \$15 and \$25 for quantities of up to 45 days. Employees reported that some medications that were \$3 for a 90-day supply the previous fiscal year, are now \$50 - a 1667 percent increase.

Cecelia Januszkiewicz, Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management, said Rx co-pays had not increased in 13 years, but the state's costs have risen dramatically. She added that while

the Governor values employees' service, the state must balance the needs of all taxpayers.

The \$700 cap on the co-pays provides some protection for unrestrained costs, Januszkiewicz said.

Although she stated that the state plans to continue with the current Rx program, MCEA is calling on state employees and retirees to contact their legislators and protest the program.

Legislators, some of them state workers, delivered words of support for the group. Attending were Senators Lisa Gladden and Nathaniel McFadden, and Delegates Sandy Rosenberg and Frank Turner. Representatives from the offices of U.S. Rep. Elijah Cummings and Talmadge Branch also spoke.

New officers elected for Area II

Presidents representing chapters in Area II, the Baltimore metropolitan region, elected a new slate of officers. The new Area Governor is Gerald Dunavant; Robert Kirkland is the Vice Governor; Lark Pugh is treasurer; and Cristina Kirkland is secretary.

Mark your calendars!

October 5 - Town Meeting on Health Care Crisis, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., American Legion Home Post 42, 405 Northern Ave., Hagerstown 21740. Call Alice Nelson, Labor Relations Specialist, at MCEA, 410-298-8800 or 1-888-611-MCEA, x231 or the Western Maryland office at 1-888-614-6232.

October 10 - Chapter 152 Area III Meeting, 11 a.m., Annapolis American Legion Post 7, 1905 Crownsville Rd.

October 10 - Columbus Day. State and MCEA offices closed.

October 12 - Retirees Chapter 152 Areas I & II Meeting, 11 a.m., Tall Cedars Hall, 2501 Putty Hill Ave., Parkville. You must RSVP with the luncheon fee. For more information contact Chapter 152 at MCEA, 410-298-8800, ext. 234.

October 19 - Retirees Chapter 152 Area V Meeting, 11 a.m., Asbury Methodist Church. You must RSVP with the luncheon fee by Oct. 5. For more information contact Chapter 152 at MCEA, 410-298-8800 or 1-888-611-MCEA (6232), ext. 234.

October 20 - Board of Directors Meeting, 7 p.m., MCEA Headquarters.

October 21 - Town Meeting on Health Care Crisis, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Allegany College of Maryland-Auditorium, 12401 Willow Brook Rd., SE, Cumberland, 21502. Call Alice Nelson, Labor Relations Specialist, at MCEA, 410-298-8800 or 1-888-611-MCEA, x231 or the Western Maryland office at 1-888-614-6232.