



OCTOBER 2004

# TEAMSTERS Public Services News

## Getting Well

### Local 445 Celebrates Victory At St. Luke's-Cornwall Hospital

After nearly a year of difficult contract negotiations, life is finally returning to normal for 440 members of Local 445 employed by St. Luke's-Cornwall Hospital in Newburgh, New York. They have overwhelmingly approved a four-year contract that is superior to any of their past agreements.

The new contract is a result of a joint negotiation effort between Local 445 and Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1199 with the hospital. The 1,200 member workforce includes nurses, service, technical, skilled maintenance and business office workers at the hospital.

"This is monumental," said Cathy Del Rosso, a nurse in her seventh year at the hospital. "We've never been able to achieve this type of contract before. It's clear that we have to keep up this new energy and unified spirit to stay strong in the future."

The workers will receive a variety of wage and benefit increases as well as improvements in working

conditions. The contract will help achieve parity with workers at other area hospitals, which was a main issue for employees.

#### Eyes On The Prize

The long negotiation process was intense, with frustration levels rising as time wore on. Local 445 leaders and key union members at the hospital worked hard to keep morale up and make sure the issues and plan of action were clearly understood by all of the members.

"The hospital tried scare tactics with the community but it did not work," said Fred Smit, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 445. "People in the community supported the workers. The hospital finally realized they were going to have to deal fairly with us."

Highlights of the contract include:

- Wage increases nearing 40 percent over the four-year contract;
- Representation in management discussions regarding staffing and practices;
- Inclusion of all workers in pension and benefits packages; and
- Transfer of all healthcare benefits to a union plan in 2008.



## Election 2004: A Clear Choice for Working Families Bush for Big Business, Kerry for Workers

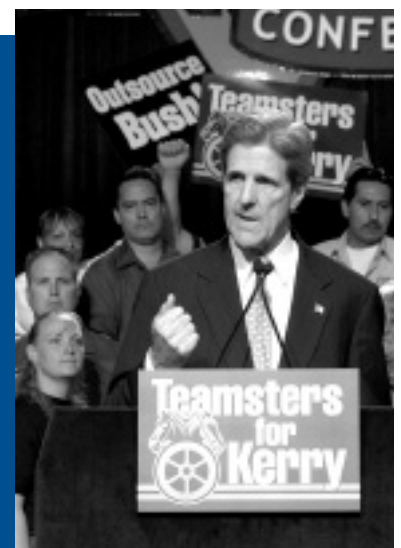
Since taking office, George W. Bush has made it clear what his attitude is toward the needs of working families. From health care to retirement security to jobs and trade, this administration consistently has worked for its Big Business contributors and against the men and women across this country who work for a living.

Still, many people are asking: How would a second Bush term affect the needs and

challenges of working families? During his acceptance speech at the Republican Convention in early September, Bush shared his vision for working families, if he's given a second term in office. In his speech, the President set his sights on basic worker benefits.

"Many of our most fundamental systems—the tax code, health coverage, pension plans, worker training—were created

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Senator Kerry at the Teamsters Unity Conference



## A Message from Public Services Division Director Carl Haynes

# Taking Action

**“Our voices do matter. Our actions make a difference.”**

Members of the Public Services Division have a well-earned reputation for fighting for the rights of all working families. Our members have been successful in job actions because they are not afraid of the tough fights and will stand their ground for as long as it takes to gain the respect and compensation they deserve.

We are now in a time when that strength and willingness to fight for justice is more important than ever. For the past four years we have dealt with a weakening economy, the loss of thousands of jobs and cuts to healthcare and pension plans. Companies and municipalities are using economic fears to take away benefits and as justification for outsourcing jobs.

As members of one of the most powerful unions in the country, we must pool our strength, resources and energy to stop the trend of anti-labor and anti-family legislation in our state and local governments.

We believe that John Kerry is the right candidate to lead this country back to solid economic ground. There is too much at stake for working families not to be involved. We are depending on each one of you to help win this battle and force a change in the White House this year. Our voices do matter. Our actions make a difference.

# Rally Ho!

## Local 952 Members Support OCTA Bus Drivers

Patti Stellmach, a 26-year veteran coach driver for the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), gave careful thought to the merits of holding a rally to focus public attention on contract negotiations for coach drivers before agreeing to the action.

The discussions over a new three-year contract for 1,200 full- and part-time drivers had been dragging on since March. Stellmach and her fellow drivers—all members of Local 952 in Orange, California—also voted to authorize a strike if discussions continue to stall. The rally, held on September 1, brought more than 800 members of Local 952 and their families to the OCTA headquarters.

“I care about my riders and know the impact any job action has on their lives,” Stellmach said. “But we need to be able to stay even with cost of living increases.”

Drivers are asking for a 3.8 percent wage increase per year to match the cost of living increases in Southern California as well as changes to a customer complaint system that unfairly penalizes drivers for rider protests on issues out of their control.

### The Personal Touch

In addition to the rally, members are also initiating a series of one-on-one driver visits to city council members and county supervisors. The goal is to force the OCTA to bring the negotiations to a fair conclusion through the political mobilization of the more than 1,500 drivers, mechanics and service employees.

“We want each member to visit at least one city official,” said Donna Metcalfe, a business representative for Local 952. “Our elected officials need to be reminded that support is a two-way street.”

“We have the potential to be a strong voice in the community and we intend to use it,” said Patrick D. Kelly, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 952. “This is about fair play, dignity and respect. We’ll keep at it until our members receive the contract they deserve.”



# ELECTION 2004: A Clear Choice For Working Families

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for the world of yesterday, not of tomorrow,” the President stated. Clearly, Bush intends to use the power of his office to continue undermining—and in some cases abolishing—critical health and retirement programs.

He also laid out his plan to advance his assault on core labor rights. Just days after his administration implemented new regulations that will take overtime rights away from 6 million working Americans, Bush pledged in his speech to go even further in a second term. He called for new “labor law reform”—including flex-time and comp-time programs—that would enable more companies to force their employees to

work expanded and constantly changing schedules without any additional compensation.

## **Kerry-Edwards: Renewing America's Commitment to Working Families**

Fortunately, John Kerry and John Edwards know that health coverage, pensions, and worker training are not things of the past. These two leaders have proven their commitment to working families, as both of them have earned lifetime labor voting records of better than 95 percent.

The Kerry-Edwards health care plan would make the same insurance that



members of Congress use available to all Americans, ensuring that everyone has access to affordable, quality health care. Right now they are leading the fight in Congress to allow for the re-importation of safe, approved prescription drugs from Canada, drastically reducing the costs of medication for seniors and other working Americans.

Kerry and Edwards would also bring a renewed commitment to job creation and fair trade to the White House. They will close tax loopholes that encourage companies to move overseas, and they will put an end to the Bush administration's “outsourcing” agenda, which has caused 1 million American jobs to leave the country.

“Working families and union members find themselves facing the greatest challenges and, perhaps, the bleakest future in fifty years,” said Jim Hoffa, Teamsters General President. “Fortunately, we can do something about it. By voting the issues that matter most to us—health care, retirement security, jobs and trade—we can help renew our nation's commitment to the values that built our economy and created the middle class. We can put America back to work!”

*for more information log on to*  
**[www.TeamstersForKerry.org](http://www.TeamstersForKerry.org)**

## **A SECOND BUSH TERM:**

### *What Would It Mean for Working Families?*

**HEALTH CARE:** 3 million retirees will lose their employer-provided prescription drug plan due to George Bush's sham prescription drug plan, and 5.2 million more people are without health insurance today than four years ago. With a second term in office Bush will be able to move forward plans to privatize Medicare and establish “medical savings accounts” which would allow wealthier Americans to buy their way out of the health care crisis.

**RETIREMENT SECURITY:** 10 million working Americans—including many Teamsters—saw their retirement plans put in jeopardy when the President used a veto threat to prevent Congress from enacting meaningful pension relief for multi-employer pension plans. **The President will continue to promote an agenda that harms traditional pension plans and their participants**, while at the same time undermining laws passed in recent years to reign in corporate CEOs who doctor the books and lie to investors.

**JOBS AND TRADE:** 2 million more Americans are out of work today than at the beginning of the Bush administration, and 1 million jobs have gone overseas due to Bush's outsourcing policies. **Bush administration officials have already stated their intention to enter the United States into more job-killing trade deals, and the President himself committed during his convention speech that he would continue his “free trade” agenda.**



**“On November 2, stand up for working families and elect public officials like John Kerry who will build our middle class rather than destroy it.”**

# Vote!

Every working man and woman who cares about their future—the future of their jobs, the future of their healthcare and retirements, and the very future of our country—should vote for John Kerry and John Edwards on November 2.

Let’s cut through the spin and campaign rhetoric and simplify the presidential race to what it is really all about. The Bush/Cheney ticket is for corporate interests while John Kerry and John Edwards stand with working Americans.

Kerry and Edwards support the right to organize. They have rallied workers on picket lines. John Kerry was once a warehouse driver and member of Teamsters Local 25. John Edwards has worked in a mill. Can you imagine Bush or Cheney—both former

CEOs—on a picket line? You would also have to be dreaming to think Bush/Cheney would do anything to strengthen workers’ rights at the expense of corporate profits.

Don’t be fooled by wedge issues, comments taken out of context and savvy advertising. The choice is clear. A John Kerry administration would welcome labor as a partner in Washington. Four more years of George Bush could destroy what it has taken 100 years to build. On November 2, stand up for working families and elect public officials like John Kerry who will build our middle class rather than destroy it. And remember, every vote counts.

Fraternally,

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