

Weekly Word



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John Vasko

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Bertina Forde Crossing Dedication

On Monday from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm there will be a sign dedication ceremony at 691 St Paul Street where Bertina was struck and killed. The formal ceremony will begin promptly at 11:30 and end at noon with a small reception in the St Paul Street training room until 12:30 pm.

Since this is a sign approved through the City of Rochester, Mayor Robert Duffy will be doing the actual commemoration of the crossing.

Due to the parking situation at St Paul, workers from Westfall Rd should make use of the bus that will be provided. The bus will leave Westfall around 11:05am and return by 1pm. The first 42 people to get on the bus will have passage.

Note:

- 1) **Employees who want to be part of this event must use their lunch hour and can be approved for up to one half hour additional time as regular hours (do not need to use banked credits). Also note that you must have approval for the extra time through your supervisor**
- 2) **This reception will not have lunch food, so you will need to plan accordingly**
- 3) **This is a day where we are asking folks to wear purple, Bertina's favorite color**

Negotiations Update

As many of you know our contract with Monroe County expires at the end of this year. I want to take a couple of moments to provide an update on where planning stands.

At the membership meeting in February, we certified/voted the negotiating team members to be:

John Vasko	FSW president
Peg Capuano	FSW Vice-president
Evelyn Evans	FSW Services grievance chair
Christine Couchman	FSW Certification grievance chair
Judy Gradford	FSW Mobilization chair/caseworker
Mark Robinson	FSW Steward/ Children's Center
Chris Palozzi	Alternate/ examiner

In assembling the team, I always try to select from the volunteers, a balance of folks representing the membership. Mark has since received a promotion out of the bargaining unit, so I have appointed Chris, as alternate, to become a full team member and asked Adolla DeWolf, Children's Center teacher, to be the alternate.

Joining us again as our IUE-CWA staff representative is Mike Rusinek. Mike comes to us following Jean Zimmer's retirement after 40 years of working with Monroe County as either a caseworker or as IUE-CWA staff rep. Mike worked with us around the mid-1990's so he knows much of what we do. I hope to have him at a membership meeting in the future so that you all can get to know him.

At this point we have had two half day sessions where we had basic orientation, established ground rules, worked on our information request list, and finalized a member survey.

We have contracted with a third party researcher to conduct the survey, which we are hoping to have available electronically. To access the survey you would simply go to a specific web address to respond to the questions. The results would then be tabulated and include a presentation to the membership, as well as document support for our positions at the bargaining table. We will also be gathering information on member satisfaction on a variety of issues and asking for direction, if you have specific opinions. We decided to use a third party for this to keep the responses confidential, for those who choose confidentiality, and keep the results and analysis free from any local influence, or charges thereof. As soon as we are able, we will advise you of the process for survey completion.

In the coming months we expect to visit the various worksites to hear comments/suggestions firsthand from each of you. Added to that will be regular membership meetings to discuss the progress/problems we experience at the bargaining table.

These are tough economic times for workers across the country and we are no exception. We all need to be active and standing in solidarity if we expect to receive the fair contract we deserve. Our Mobilization Team has been working on cues to help increase this solidarity and to educate all of you on the issues. Now is the time to stay informed and active. I'll end with an old Union slogan, "Together we bargain, divided we beg."