

CWUC Connection

The Connection is a monthly newsletter written and published by the Central Wisconsin UniServ Council. This is an 11.29 communication with WEAC members, Federal Statute CFR 100.8 (b) (4)

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CWUC is committed to organizing for strong locals, protecting members' rights,
and advocating for strong public schools

Volume 38, No. 5 – January 2010

URGENT: Protect health care benefits for middle class families

Educators – Say NO to tax on health care benefits!

The Health Care Reform debate in Congress is coming to a close. President Obama plans to sign a Health Care Reform bill into law before his State of the Union address in just a few weeks.

The Senate version of the health care bill includes an Excise Tax that will tax the health benefits of middle class families. As the final bill is crafted, we must stand together to say “No tax on health care benefits!”

TAKE ACTION

Call, e-mail or visit your legislators before FRIDAY, JANUARY 22 to urge them to protect health care benefits and salaries for working families. Even if you have already called in the past, please call again.

Let your legislators know that we support Health Care Reform, but we cannot support an Excise Tax that will reduce benefits and fund Health Care Reform on the backs of the middle class.

Call your U.S. Senators:

Senator Herb Kohl (202) 224-5653
Senator Russ Feingold (202) 224-5323



CWUC CALENDAR

Wed., Jan. 20	Negotiations Cluster III – (Wis. Valley/Great Northern Conf.) 6:30 – CWUC, Mosinee
Fri., Sat., Sun. Jan. 22 – 24	NEA Midwest Regional Leadership Conf., Hilton, Minneapolis
Tues. & Wed., Feb. 2 – 3	Professional Staff Mtg., Wisconsin Dells
Wed., Feb. 3	Prof. & Associate Staff Jt. Mtg., Wis. Dells
Wed. – Fri., Feb. 3 – 5	Associate Staff Mtg., Wisconsin Dells
Wed., Feb. 3	Neg. Cluster I (Cloverbelt Conf.) AND Neg. Cluster II (Marawood Conf.) – CANCELLED
Mon., Feb. 8	Layoff & Non-renewal Workshop – Dinner 5:30; Workshop 6:00 - 7:30; CWUC Office
Tues., Feb. 9	PDP 101 – Intro. to Prof. Development Plans 5:30 pm – CWUC Office, Mosinee
Wed., Feb. 10	Negotiations Cluster IV – (Central WI Conf.) 6:30 – Grand Seasons, Waupaca
Thurs., Feb. 11	CWUC Executive Committee Mtg. – 6:00 CWUC, Mosinee
Wed., Feb. 17	Negotiations Cluster III – (Wis. Valley/Great Northern Conf.) 6:30 – CWUC, Mosinee
Fri. – Sun., Feb. 19-21	WEAC Board & Committee Mtgs. Sheraton, Madison
Fri. & Sat., Feb. 26-27	WEAC Winter Conference South – Madison Marriott West, Middleton
Fri., March 5	CWE Convention, Greenheck Field House
Fri. & Sat., Mar. 5-6	WEAC Winter Conference North – The Plaza Hotel & Suites, Wausau

Do you have a graduating high school senior?



2010 CWUC AND WEAC SCHOLARSHIP FORMS FOR GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS ARE AVAILABLE

CWUC Scholarship forms have been mailed to high school counselors in all CWUC locals. The form is also available on the CWUC website at www.weac.org/cwuc. If you have a son or daughter who is currently a senior, make sure they apply for the CWUC scholarship. The course of study is not restricted to education for the CWUC scholarship.

The deadline for RECEIPT of applications in the CWUC office is Friday, February 26, 2010, by the close of the business day. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS! Recipients and alternates will be notified the first week in April and the scholarships will be presented at the CWUC Representative Assembly on Thursday evening, May 6, 2010.

WEAC also sponsors scholarships that are intended for students who are pursuing an education major. The deadline for applying for the 2010 WEAC Scholarship is **February 20, 2010**. Applications for the WEAC scholarship are available on the OnWEAC Members Only site at www.weac.org

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR... RAIN, SLEET AND SNOW can require cancellation of CWUC or WEAC scheduled meetings on short notice. If the weather is causing travel problems and you are in doubt if a meeting is being held, call the CWUC office at 800-472-0010 or 715-693-1740 to check for cancellations. Stay safe and drive carefully. Your union cares about you!

Is your district anticipating layoffs?

Because of an inadequate school funding formula, many school districts have found themselves having to lay off personnel. A good time to review the layoff provision in your contract is before layoff notices are given. Once that happens, it suddenly becomes very personal for some people. Establishing and/or reviewing the process before that point is much easier. It is recommended that you do this now, before names or positions are attached to the layoff.

Many times with potential layoffs comes the pressure on older staff to retire. Remember that retirement discussions become very sensitive at that time as well, and given the age of potential retirees, comes the potential of age discrimination. Potential retirement discussions should never be linked to potential layoff notices. It is inappropriate, and potentially illegal for Administration to pressure an older employee to retire because of age.

The CWUC Contract Maintenance Committee is sponsoring a:

Layoff and Non-renewal Workshop

DATE: Monday, February 8, 2010
TIME: 5:30 – 6:00 p.m. ~ Dinner and Registration
6:00 – 7:30 p.m. ~ Workshop
7:30 p.m. ~ Questions
PLACE: CWUC Office, 370 Orbiting Drive, Mosinee, WI

All CWUC local associations are encouraged to participate in this important workshop. Members who have attended in previous years are welcome and encouraged to bring newer members along.

TOPICS: ✓ Statutory & Contractual Language/Timelines
✓ Seniority, Bumping, Partial Layoffs
✓ Unemployment Benefits
✓ Interactive Contract Interpretation Exercise

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. Call the CWUC office at 800-472-0010 or 715-693-1740 no later than TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2. Mileage will be paid for 1 car per local.

Health Care & Benefits:

Does the conversation make you nervous?

The health care debate continues in Washington, and closer to home, the attack on employee health insurance benefits has increased in intensity. There are many statements being heard in communities that advocate for public employees to give up the benefits that have been bargained for over many years. What you need to remember is that the problem is not you, it's not your benefits, nor is it your union.

In December, the Wisconsin Citizen Action group released a report titled "Wisconsin Health Insurance Cost Rankings 2010." This report shows that health insurance costs continue to be the issue, and the need for good health care benefits becomes even more important as these costs rise. Wisconsin's Citizen Action is a non-profit group studying health care and economic development.

What are some of the key findings?

- Wisconsin health insurance rates have increased faster than the national average. While national employer-based single health insurance premiums have increased 120% this decade, they have increased 179% in Wisconsin. All Wisconsin regions and metro areas have suffered health insurance inflation above the national average.
- The regions with the highest costs have remained relatively constant over the past four years. Northwestern, West Central, and Southeastern Wisconsin continue to be high cost regions. This year, for the first time in this report, North Central Wisconsin is the highest cost region, albeit by a small margin. The highest cost metro areas are Wausau, Stevens Point, Wisconsin Rapids, Kenosha, LaCrosse, and Eau Claire. South Central Wisconsin remains the lowest cost region.
- A November 2009 annual survey by Mercer Health and Benefits found Wisconsin health insurance costs to be 22% above the national average (\$1,943 more per employee.) The Mercer survey has found similar results for a number of years.
- According to a 2009 report from the New America Foundation, the average family health insurance policy in Wisconsin will cost nearly \$25,000 per year by 2016. Worker contributions to premiums will increase 106% for family policies and 119% for single coverage in Wisconsin by 2016.
- The 2005 Health Care Cost Quotient ranked Wisconsin second highest in the nation in employer health care costs.
- A 2005 U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Study found that out of 319 metro areas, 8 of the top 10 cities in the nation for physician costs, and 2 of the 10 cities for hospital costs are in Wisconsin.

For the complete report, visit <http://citizenactionwi.org>

Plan to attend the 2010 CWE Convention

The 2010 Central Wisconsin Educators' Convention will be held on Friday, March 5 at the Greenheck Field House and the D.C. Everest High School in Schofield. The feature afternoon speaker is Dr. Rich Allen. Dr. Allen will provide you with ideas on how to maximize the potential of students through the use of instructional strategies and techniques that will seize and hold students' attention. Plan to attend this practical, energetic, and dynamic session.

For updated information and membership fees for the 2010 CWE Convention, visit the new website at www.cweconvention.org. You will find registration information, sectional updates, vendor lists, and directions to the convention facility at this site. This website is being updated on a regular basis and will soon include a program of events.

Looking ahead to 2011...

Are you interested in getting out the word on a new program or a topic that you think will benefit other educators? Do you know of someone in your own district that needs to have their program shared with others?

The CWE Executive Committee is currently seeking area educators for the **2011 Convention** who would be willing to present sectionals dealing with topics of interest to the members. If you are interested, send a brief description of your presentation to Kristin Thompson, CWE Executive Secretary, 3718 Woodland Ridge Rd., Wausau, WI 54403, or email her at thompson2798@gmail.com

Recognize the efforts of a CWUC colleague, member, or reporter for WEAC's annual awards



Do you know someone who should be honored for their work to advance great schools in central Wisconsin? WEAC has a number of awards for which you can nominate someone special. Full details and nomination forms can be found at www.weac.org. After you get to the home page, look for the "About WEAC" section on the right side of the website. This will take you to the entry forms for award nominations.

New this year is the opportunity to do everything online. Take some time to nominate someone special in CWUC. Great things are happening in our UniServ and we need to get the word out to others about the impact we have on educating children and supporting our union.

Nominations for all awards are due at WEAC no later than February 1. What awards should you consider nominating someone for?

- Outreach:** Recognizes effective public relations and active community involvement by local associations and their membership.
- School Bell:** Designed to recognize Wisconsin reporters, broadcasters, high school journalism teachers and students for excellence in reporting and analysis of public education news.
- Cunningham, Dickinson, Watson Commemorative Staff Award:** Recognizes a staff person for actions, ideas, initiatives, and/or consistent performance that enables members in Wisconsin to better themselves and advance the level of public education.
- The Friend of Education Award:** This is similar to CWUC's award...an opportunity to honor an individual or group who has made significant contributions to education and/or the profession in Wisconsin.
- The Lewandowski Award:** Recognizes and encourages the involvement of members and affiliate associations in humanitarian efforts.
- The Educational Support Professional Award:** Honor a person who shows outstanding accomplishments in enhancing the image and advancement of ESPs in the community.
- The Tenia Jenkins Activist Award:** Recognize someone who has made a significant contribution to activism among our WEAC members for the benefit of students and members.

Remember, **all nominations must be made by February 1.** CWUC has had many recipients during past years for the outlined awards. Take some time to make this year's award presentation at the WEAC RA a special one for CWUC!

CWUC's "Celebrate Reading" Bookmark Contest

WHO CAN ENTER: K-12 students in CWUC public schools.

WHAT IS THE CONTEST? Design a 2" x 8½" bookmark. It can be anything 2-D, and must reproduce easily. Contest rules and entry forms including a template for the bookmark are being mailed to local association presidents or can be requested by calling CWUC.

WHAT IS THE SUBJECT? Design a bookmark that promotes reading books and developing literacy throughout the year for students. Absolutely no use of the Cat in the Hat or other Dr. Seuss characters will be permitted. Violation of this could jeopardize NEA and WEAC's rights to use the logo on "Read Across America" materials.

WHAT MEDIUM MAY BE USED? Designs may be created with crayons, colored pencils, markers, ink, and/or watercolors. Full color artwork will be accepted. Winning bookmarks must be reproducible. Winners will be judged on originality, creativity, neatness, and printability. All work must be original.

WHAT IS THE PRIZE? The winning design will be printed and distributed at the CWE Convention on March 5, 2010. The winning entry artist will receive a \$50.00 prize.

WHEN ARE ENTRIES DUE? Entries must be received in the CWUC office no later than 4:30 p.m., Monday, March 1, 2010.

Note: Submitting a bookmark releases the artwork to CWUC. Permission is given to CWUC to reproduce, publish, and use the bookmark through CWUC-sponsored activities. The student's name will be listed as the artist.

Great news from WEAC... Now you have two different Conferences

to choose from to update your union know-how, to improve your personal/professional image, and to meet and greet other union members from throughout the state as friends and colleagues. The WEAC Winter Conference was designed for members to explore something new and/or go into greater depth on a single topic. This provides for exploration of an unfamiliar subject as well as intense instruction on a specific interest, allowing for individual growth and development.

Members talked and WEAC listened and for the very first time WEAC will be sponsoring two regional conferences to reduce travel time and cost! The format has been changed to a Friday evening/Saturday event, held in collaboration with Friday's SWEIO Convention in the south, and the CWE Convention in the north. The WEAC Winter Conference South, with a National Board Writing Retreat, will be held on February 26-27, 2010 at the Madison Marriott West in Middleton.

The WEAC Winter Conference North will be held on March 5 - 6, 2010, at the Plaza Hotel & Suites in Wausau. Sessions include:

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| 1. C.A.R.E. (Cultures, Abilities, Resilience, and Effort): Strategies for Closing the Achievement Gaps | 8. Collective Bargaining: Current Issues in Collective Bargaining for Teachers and ESP Bargainers |
| 2. Real Colors: Maximizing Your Potential | 9. Member Mobilization |
| 3. Can You Hear Me Now? | 10. SMART Board Training |
| 4. W3: Communication and Collaboration on the Local Level | 11. Professional Development: ESP and Teacher |
| 5. Learning to Reproduce: How to discover, attract, and develop high capacity local leaders | 12. WTCS Issues 2010: Uniting for Action |
| 6. The NEA Academy | 13. Roadmap to Becoming a National Board Certified Teacher |
| 7. Family Feud – The Benefits Edition (a Friday evening Game Show) | |

The cost to attend is the same in both locations and is the same whether you attend Friday and Saturday, or just Saturday. The fee is \$70.00 and the **registration deadline for Wausau is February 22.** Lodging fees are \$80.00 for a single room, or \$40 per member for a double room (must be conference participants.) For registration information, go to www.weac.org/winterconference. If you have any questions, contact Gayle Isermann at isermanng@weac.org or Paul Anjeski at anjeskip@weac.org.

This is an excellent opportunity for CWUC members to attend a high quality, educational, relaxing, and fun weekend that's almost in your own backyard. Conference space is limited, so don't delay. Register today!

CWUC Hosts Free Financial Seminar Series... PRESENTED BY WEA TRUST MEMBER BENEFITS

Finances 101: Seven Mistakes New Members Make With Their Money

Making wise financial choices early in your career can have a significant impact on your future financial security and give you peace of mind.

- Find out how to avoid the seven most common financial mistakes made by new members.
- Learn how to set and achieve your financial goals.
- Learn how to adopt a savings strategy that is right for you.
- Find out the advantages of different savings options.
- Discover resources available to help you make sound financial decisions.

This presentation will provide the information you need to start your career on the right financial foot. Don't miss it!

Wednesday, February 24, 2010 – 6:30 p.m. – CWUC Office, Lower Level Conference Room, 370 Orbiting Dr., Mosinee, WI

Register online at <http://financescwuc0224.eventbrite.com/> or call 715-693-1740 or 800-472-0010. This is the first in a series of seminars to be offered at CWUC in 2010. Save the dates for these upcoming seminars:

Wed., March 24 – Protecting Your Financial Security

Wed., April 28 – Retirement Savings: The Keys to Success

Future seminars will cover topics such as Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS), investing strategies, and preparing for retirement.