

# National Staff Organization **CONTACT**

The pride, commitment, tradition and advocacy to lead, promote, defend and secure the rights of its members.

May, 2006

Chuck Agerstrand, President

## **National Bargaining Conference Promotes Unionism** *Goals and Settlement Standards Discussed*

Over 100 NSO members gathered for the 2006 NSO National Bargaining and Pension Benefits Conference held April 21 – 22 in Denver, CO. Aptly titled *Surviving Chaos: Lead, Promote, Secure and Defend*, the conference focused on organizational survival skills that not only strengthen state affiliates but promote solidarity across state lines as well as a discussion on establishing national CBC Goals and Settlement Standards.

In his welcoming remarks on Friday evening, NSO President Chuck Agerstrand asked members to take the message of unionism back to their home states. “We must walk the walk together, not as individuals,” said Agerstrand.



**Chuck Agerstrand**  
NSO President



**Lynn Adler**  
NSO VP for Programs



**Deb Stevens**  
Delaware

“What happens in one state can affect us all.”

NSO Directors and CBC Cochairs Ron Goldenstein, Rosemary Wolf and Butch Santicola gave an overview of the importance of the CBC goals and settlement standards in general and the value of such a document.

Conferees were told to effectively establish and maintain a culture of unionism, state NSO affiliates must be committed to NSO CBC goals and settlement standards, comply with the underlying policies and establish consequences that enhance the chance for success.

On Saturday, NSO members chose from a number of timely training sessions conducted by NSO members.

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## **Agenda Set for 2006 NSO Representative Assembly** *Nationally known organizer to address delegates*

NSO members from across the country will meet in San Jose, CA, for the 2006 NSO Representative Assembly. The annual business meeting will be held June 9-10 at the Fairmont San Jose. Delegates will hear reports, debate important union issues, elect officers and set the 2006-07 budget.

“It’s important that every state affiliate be represented,” said NSO President Chuck Agerstrand. “The information shared and the decisions made at the RA play a major role in building solidarity among our members and strengthening our resolve to remain united.”

Delegate registration begins on Thurs., June 8<sup>th</sup> from 1-5:00 p.m. and continues at 8 a.m. on Friday, June 9<sup>th</sup>. A networking reception for delegates will be held the evening of the 9<sup>th</sup>. The Assembly will be called to order at 9:30 a.m. on Friday and will adjourn at approximately noon on Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup>.

For delegates to be seated at the RA, NSO affiliates must have paid in full all dues and crisis fund obligations, updated their membership lists on-line, and, if appropriate, filed their LM reports before June 1.

Hotel reservations made after May 9<sup>th</sup> will be based on space availability at the hotel’s prevailing rate. If for some reason you need to cancel a room reservation, please email NSO Secretary Mary Henson at [MHenson@mea.org](mailto:MHenson@mea.org) instead of the hotel. This process allows the opportunity of assigning another NSO affiliate or delegate to the room. For more information logon [www.nationalstaff.org](http://www.nationalstaff.org).

Jeff Blodgett, Executive Director of Wellstone Action and Wellstone Action Fund, will address delegates during Friday’s business session. Wellstone Action and the Fund combine to form a national center for



See Blodgett/pg. 2

## Unionism, cont.

Thanks to Dennis Eisenberg (WI), Cheryl Singleton (MA), Mike Townes (PA), Barbara Kraft (legal counsel) and Mort Reinhart (pension benefits consultant), Mary Ann Jandoli and Steve Swetsky (NJ) and Lynn Adler (IL) for their time in preparing and presenting trainings.

Breaking away from the traditional setup of individual CBC's meeting together; conferees were randomly placed in four different sessions with each CBC represented. Each group discussed how to utilize the NSO Goals and Settlement Standards to promote and protect bargaining at the affiliate level.

"We wanted to give our members some insight into how other CBC's operate," said Vice President for Programs Lynn Adler. "This gave everyone the opportunity to hear a different point of view. Their conversations will be the basis for future discussions on this issue."

According to Delaware SO's Deb Stevens, the value of a set of comprehensive standards became increasingly clearer when faced with a negative bargaining situation. "We had it pretty good until a new leadership team came along," said the Acting DSO President. "But when the wolf is at the door this type of backing is essential."

Information from each group was recorded and in the closing session a reporter outlined the information gathered. The information provided will be tabulated, studied by the CBC Cochairs and executive committee for future action.



2006 NSO National Bargaining Conference

## Deadline for Winter Advocacy Proposals Announced

NSO Vice President Lynn Adler is currently soliciting session proposals for the 2007 NSO Winter Advocacy Retreat. The retreat will be held at the Hyatt Regency Orange County in Garden Grove, CA. "NSO members continue to design new and exciting training opportunities for our members," said Adler. "I encourage anyone who has a program that is timely and pertinent to union advocacy submit a proposal."

All proposals must contain the following information: session title; length of session (2-1.2 hours or 5 hours); trainer names and addresses (Trainers should be one associate staff and one

**2007 Winter Advocacy Retreat  
January 11-13  
Hyatt Regency Orange County  
Garden Grove, CA**

professional staff. NSO will pay for up two per session); brief descriptor and session outline; target audience (i.e., grievance representative, new bargainer, associate staff, etc.); participant limit, if any; and equipment needs and room setup (NSO does not provide a data (LCD) projector.)

Deadline for proposals is July 28, 2006.

Proposals may be submitted to Lynn by mail (Lynn Adler, IEA-NEA, 105 W. Adams, Suite 2800, Chicago, IL 60603); Fax (312.407.0229) or by email at [lynn.adler@ieanea.org](mailto:lynn.adler@ieanea.org).

## Blodgett, cont.

training in political and public advocacy skills for the progressive movement. They were formed to carry on the work of Paul and Sheila Wellstone. Blodgett spent thirteen years as a senior aide, advisor and campaign manager to U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone before his untimely death.

"Jeff's resume is impressive," said Agerstrand. "His background gives him first hand knowledge of the

organizational challenges we face not only as union members but as union organizers."

Blodgett began his 23 year career in public life as a community organizer and also has extensive experience running nonprofit advocacy organizations. Today Blodgett trains, teaches and speaks extensively on campaigns and elections, leadership development, and organizing for political power.

# NSO Affiliate News



## ISTA PSO Votes to Impose Sanctions

Due to intolerable working conditions, Indiana State Teachers Association's Professional Staff Organization voted recently to impose sanctions against ISTA in respect to UniServ District 3-A. "This situation has gone on for over 5 years," said ISTA PSO president Sandy Steele. "We'd tried every avenue available to us to bring about, at the very minimum, a civil working environment, but up to now management has done nothing to alleviate the situation." Over the period in question, two different UniServ Directors were treated in a disrespectful and demeaning manner by a local Association leader. PSO repeatedly requested management intervention and even offered various solutions to resolve and/or minimize the problem but management failed to make any significant changes.

"Current PSO members cannot recall a time in the history of ISTA that an official sanction has been implemented. We just felt the situation had gone unresolved far too long," said Steele. "Imposing sanctions is our last resort, but we believe management has left us no choice."

"We applaud Indiana PSO for taking the steps necessary to make sure that other union members are made aware of the problems in this particular UniServ district," said NSO President Chuck Agerstrand. "It takes a lot of courage to take on management in this fashion. NSO stands ready to assist them anyway it can."

Steele felt NSO's support of the sanctions was vital to the success of the process. "Chuck's positive response to our request added the full force of the NSO to our actions," said Steele. "Our union brothers and sisters from across the country needed to know that Indiana UniServ District 3-A is an undesirable place to work and we needed to know NSO is behind us during this difficult time."

The ISTA PSO is currently in the process of grieving the issue. "We've tried to work with management and avoid the costs of arbitrations over the past few years," said Steele. "However, we're ready to do whatever it takes to resolve this situation."

PSO has also distributed the sanctions document to ISTA leadership including RA delegates, board members, local presidents and district council members and plan other activities as needed.

To offer words of support, email PSO President Sandy Steele at [SSteele@ista-in.org](mailto:SSteele@ista-in.org) or to read the sanctions document log on [www.nationalstaff.org](http://www.nationalstaff.org).

## NY Merger Impacts NSO Members

The New York State United Teachers recently voted unanimously to complete the final stage in the NEA/AFT merger. In August 2005, the vast majority of NEA/NY members voted to unite with NYSUT.

The fact NEA/NY has fewer staff members than NYSUT leaves both professional and associate NSO members at a disadvantage. "NSO stands ready to provide whatever support we can to our New York union brothers and sisters," said NSO President Chuck Agerstrand. "We know these are difficult times for them and we want them to know they are not alone."



## NEASO Rally Kicks Off Negotiations



NEASO members turned out in full force on May 1 at NEA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the rally was to kick off negotiations and show support for the NEASO Bargaining Team. NEASO's contract is set to expire May 31.

In preparation for all possible outcomes, the NEASO Board voted in March to establish an NEASO Strike Fund. The \$250,000 set aside is to be accessed only in the event of a strike authorized by the members.

In a newsletter distributed to its members, NEASO President Patti Ralabate assures members that a strike is not anticipated but a responsibility of the leadership to try and foresee all possibilities. Besides establishing the strike fund, NEASO listed steps for each member to follow to help ease the financial burden. Members were also informed about the \$75 per day NSO provides in the event of a strike.

NSO President Chuck Agerstrand, who attended the rally, was impressed with the excitement generated by the bargaining and organizing plan. "The energy and preparation you, NEASO members, have put into your bargaining has been awesome," said Agerstrand. "NSO is proud to stand with you and is prepared to do

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## Disaster Relief Funds Distributed

The NSO Executive Committee voted at its April meeting to distribute disaster relief funds donated by NSO members and state affiliates. To date, \$15,632.37 has been provided to help NSO members from some of the hardest hit states—Louisiana, Florida and Mississippi.



“The generosity of our members will mean that these natural disasters won’t turn into financial disasters for some of our members,” said NSO President

Chuck Agerstrand. “Hopefully no one will be affected in this way again, but if it does, we’ve established a way to be of assistance.”

Donations totaling \$36,785 were placed in an interest earning account and have earned \$279.08 in interest. The balance in the account is \$21,431.71.

If you have any questions about how the funds were distributed or if you or one of your members is eligible to receive assistance, please contact your NSO Regional Director. Disaster Relief Fund applications are available through Agerstrand or Financial Advisor Vera Stafford at [verjer@btc-bci.com](mailto:verjer@btc-bci.com).

### NEASO, cont.

whatever is necessary to help you get a contract—a contract that truly reflects your contributions, professionalism and service to NEA members.”

“Whatever happens with this state affiliate effects all NSO members,” said Agerstrand. “If we believe in teamwork, solidarity and the union, we all can be successful”.



**Agerstrand and NEASO Organizing Committee Member Michele Boyd react to Donovan King’s presentation at the Rally. King serves as the Bargaining Team Spokesperson.**



Tyrone, Bob, Deb, Chuck, Dawn, Kevin, Allison

**Coming soon to a computer near you...the new and improved NSO Website**  
**[nationalstaff.org](http://nationalstaff.org)**

**Donette Ramey**  
NSO Webmaster

**Marty Bull**  
NSO Editor

## National Staff Organization



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**[www.nationalstaff.org](http://www.nationalstaff.org)**

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