
District 9 Leadership Conference

We Are One

Las Vegas - January 30 - February 1, 2017



Introduction

CWA District 9 met in Las Vegas for its annual Leadership Conference. The theme was “We Are One”. The power of our union is increased when we work across locals and sectors.



Speakers

President Chris Shelton could not attend because of a back injury, but his assistant, Ron Collins, was there to deliver his message. We may have a new, anti-labor administration to deal with but we still have the same everyday work. We will continue to represent our members, organize new workers, and we have to do politics. We will be putting new emphasis on state legislatures, working with organizations like the State Innovation Exchange, SiX, which is working to make state more progressive. There are big changes coming to the NLRB that will have an impact. A lot of Locals are dealing with extended negotiations, which is hard on the members and expensive for us.

Sara Steffens, Secretary-Treasurer, reviewed the victories achieved in District 9. California minimum wage is currently \$10.50, the highest in the country, and will rise to \$15 in 2021. California has paid sick leave and paid Family Leave, first in the nation.

Dennis Trainor, D1 VP, gave a rundown on the Verizon strike, the biggest and most successful strike in decades. Nevada State Senator, Pat Spearman, Sara Nelson, AFA-CWA Sector VP, and Rusty McAllister, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Nevada AFL.-CIO were also guest speakers.

Threats to CWA and all unions.

2017 will be the most dangerous year in CWA history. The White House, both houses of Congress, and the Supreme Court will be working to end our right to unionize. Janus v.

AFSCME (Janus) is the new case that will determine if public sector unions can collect fees from their members. The case will probably make it to the court's fall term or next year.

On the last day of the conference, Republicans reintroduced a National Right to Work law, or as we call it, a Right to Work for Less law. Wages in RTW states are lower and workers have few protections. Without unions and a strong NLRB, workers would have no defense against firings, demotions, and pay cuts.

There are many ways Congress can hurt unions. We believe the Dept. of Labor will start to audit locals. Although we prepare LM2s and comply with all rules, these additional audits will be a huge burden. Congress can pass laws to require an affiliation election every year, or end dues collection by check off.

In Nevada the state AFL-CIO is ready to fight to protect the Davis-Bacon prevailing wage law, cuts to healthcare, and voter suppression.



Organize, organize, organize

Organizing has to be our top priority, with the emphasis on inside the union. CWA can support the locals with organizers and lost time. We need to reach out to our members and remind them why we have a union and where we'd be with out one. We need to build solidarity and work on the things that divide us. That's why this year's theme is "We are one".

CWA organized new members last year. We picked up 2300 from DIRECTV, 100 from Dollar car rentals at LAX, among others. AFA gained 450 from Cathay Pacific Airlines. The election ended late last month and 97% chose AFA as their collective bargaining representative. Cathay is the flag carrier for Hong Kong but has 450 cabin crew based in the U.S.

AFA

The Department of Transportation approved Norwegian Airline's Flag of Convenience application. This allows carriers to evade labor laws, safety regulations, taxes, and to outsource jobs. Wages and benefits fall. This happened to the maritime industry, which is why most ships seem to sail under the flag of Panama. European airlines have said they'll follow suit. According to Nelson, U.S. airlines will too, they're just not as up front about it.

Workshops

Workshops were held on winning difficult grievances, union fundraising, winning at the bargaining table, and changes to the NLRB and other attacks on labor coming from the Trump administration.

Conclusion

Tuesday everyone boarded a shuttle and took part in a rally in front of a mobility store. We marched for a fair contract, which is what it's all about.