

# REPORTER

## Strattec ratifies contract

by Al Olivares

Members at Strattec voted 222 to 24 to accept the contract proposal from Strattec Security Corp. on June 27, 2005. The negotiation process had begun in the latter part of spring and went up to the final moments prior to the ratification meeting. This contract, unanimously recommended by the Strattec Bargaining Committee, will be in effect through June 29, 2008.

Some of the highlights of this agreement include a \$750 lump sum payment that was paid out on July 11, 2005. In addition the following wage increases are included: 1.5% increase effective June 26, 2006 and a 1.5% increase effective June 25, 2007.

With regard to the medical insurance, as of September 1, 2005, the company will offer only one plan, referred to as the healthy consumer plan. This plan, by design, gives more fiscal responsibility to the

employee in the form of deductibles and co-insurance. Those individuals who have already retired will receive the 10 years of insurance or up to age 65 whichever comes first, with the company paying the whole monthly premium. If you are not 65 when the 10 years runs out, you will be entitled to medical insurance and pay what the active members pay on the shop floor at the time. However, individuals who retire after June 27, 2005 will receive 5 years of medical insurance or up to 65 years old and must pay the 20% of the monthly premium. After the 5 years, there will be no coverage offered.

Currently the committee is in the proofreading process of the final contract so we can get it into print.

Strattec members are to be commended for the turnout at the ratification meeting.

### Labor Day



**Join us at the Lakefront  
Monday September 5,  
2005 for LaborFest**

**If you march in the parade, please  
call the Union office today 414-  
463-7425 to order your free  
Laborfest T-shirt**

## September Membership Meeting

**Sunday  
September 18, 2005  
9:30 a.m.**

**Frank Monreal's El Matador  
9155 W. Bluemound Rd.**

### IMPORTANT BUSINESS

- **Reports of Officers, Grievance Representatives and Committees**
- **Discussion and action on any other proper business for this meeting.**

President's Report by Scott Godshaw

## Strattec moves forward Briggs to outsource janitor work and will meet for a successor contract

It's business as usual at Strattec after the new three year agreement had been reached and ratified by the membership at Strattec. The vote was an overwhelmingly 224 to 22.

I did attend the Strattec fin-ops and EVA meeting which was held on Friday August 5, 2005. Pat Hansen, the CFO of Strattec explained that the possibility exists of some new work coming in. This will not equate to many new people but will continue to retain the current staff we have. However, due to the retirement of several members prior to ratification, there could be some requisitions for new hires soon.

EVA was also discussed at this meeting. We were informed that due to the higher scrap rate and higher premium freight cost compared to fiscal 2004, the EVA payout was much lower than last year. The EVA payout will be 4.75% this year compared to 12.96% last year. The cost of brass, zinc and other materials were also much higher than last year. The company once again contributed to the pension fund as well. Checks will be given out on August 23rd.

Now that we have labor peace with Strattec in the form of a three year agreement, hopefully Strattec will continue to thrive and grow here in Milwaukee.

### Briggs

On August 19th, Briggs sent WARN notices to the janitors from departments 105, 953 and 945. They will be eliminated on October 21, 2005. We met with the company on the 19th so they could show us the reasons they made the decision to outsource this work. They said it will be a huge cost savings by hiring an outside firm. This is very disappointing that the company would attack this group of workers. Some of these workers were unable to handle the constant wear and tear of their bodies while performing high repetition production work. But they were able to lead very productive lives by working as janitors. We have sent Dave Debaets a letter detailing our dismay of the company's unfortunate decision.

The EVA will be a 1.98% payout. This compares to 2.58% received by the members for fiscal 2004. Checks will be distributed on August 22nd.

We are tentatively set to sit down at the end of September to discuss the possibility of a successor contract. The rumors that had been out there that the Bargaining Committee or the International Rep was unwilling to sit down was very far from the truth. Ernie Dex, our International Rep, has 12 locals and his sched-

ule is made out well in advance. At some of his other locals, he had contracts that are about to expire or would have expired as in the case of Strattec. Expirations of contracts take precedence over contracts that do not expire for another year. Our current labor agreement does not expire until August 1, 2006. People seem to be forgetting that very important item.

I sat down with Ernie the first week of March for establishing dates in June and July with the expectation that Briggs would be sending the letter for an early opener on or about April 1st. When the letter was not sent Ernie gave those dates to other locals.

Yes, I realize that the Bargaining Committee could have sent a letter also but when the company informed me that they were not interested in negotiating at that time, we certainly were not going to force them.

### HRA

The HRA (Health Risk Assessment) was recently completed at Briggs. If you take the test but do not pass, you still will receive \$60. If you take the test and pass you will receive \$180. If your spouse is under the Briggs insurance plan and takes the test, she will be eligible for \$60, pass or fail. The money you are scheduled to receive will be included on your last payroll check in January 2006. You must still be a member in January to receive this money.

At Strattec, the HRA will be administered in October also right on the premises. The dates are not out yet, however.

### Stewards

All the steward elections have been completed and I would like to congratulate the elected stewards. Most of the elections had excellent turnouts and I would like to commend the members for participating. The Executive Board and the Bargaining Committees have tentatively planned a steward training in October. An exact date has yet to be determined but as soon as the date has been finalized we will inform the stewards.

### Labor Day

Once again, Labor Day is upon us. Labor Day, our holiday, promises to be a great time down at Laborfest as always. We will meet at Zeidler Union Square and march to the Summerfest grounds. All those that participate in the parade will receive a free Local 2-232 Laborfest T-shirt. Don't delay, call the Union office today, to reserve your shirt for you, your family and your friends.



# Strattec Corner

by Al Olivares

Well, hello brothers and sisters. We have a contract in place and that in itself is truly an accomplishment. Being in negotiations for the first time, I found there was not a damn thing easy about it at all.

Facts being, I am happy we are still working with a new contract. I am, however, not necessarily happy with the results. I guess, it was like trying to get blood from a turnip. Seriously though I am very proud of the committee and have no regrets about the way we handled every step of the process. Enough about that topic.

As far as other going ons, it has been hotter than a pistol lately with enough humidity to make a crocodile sweat. With this tropic like weather, please make sure you keep your body properly hydrated, and if you even think you are becoming ill or faint from the heat, notify your work group leader or lead person immediately.

Let's see... ahh yes I have a concern about the staffing or level of employment from an hourly perspective. It would appear the company has trimmed down our numbers so much that it is causing a chain reaction of problems extending from granting vacations, to quality and training issues. It is my opinion that if the company expects to have us do our jobs effectively they need to have the proper staffing. One would almost have to believe that the company puts more stock in the immediate savings with an overly lean workforce as opposed to insuring the proper level of attention that certain aspects of our job

require. Now don't get me wrong, I am not whining about the temporary transfers that take place when an area is slower than usual and can afford such body moves. That is contractually not an issue. These very transfers are not a permanent solution to our shortage of personnel issues. These are just onesy twosy band-aids to help us get along. I have personally noticed in some areas, the company posts overtime for the shortages, which is a good start, but not in all areas. In some areas, the company needs to truly think about adding actual "bodies" to expedite the work with the proper attention and detail that is required. Another big problem being so "lean" is, it creates an environment where training of individuals becomes impossible due to production needs. Now what sense does that make? My opinion, none at all. Every employee wants to do their jobs to the best of their ability, and we will continue to do so. But for Pete's sake, the company needs to help us. I mean all the time, not just when orders are down or it is convenient.

Finally in order for us to sustain in our ever narrowing industry, the company needs to get their minds out of their wallets and on to the bigger picture, survival. Granted economics is no doubt important, but I feel a few strategic personnel acquisitions would be cheaper than all the band-aids we use in the long run and be far more beneficial as a whole.

In Solidarity,  
Bigg Al Olivares



## Membership Information

### August 2005

1262 Members in Good Standing

974 in Briggs & Stratton Unit

288 in Strattec Unit

### August Dues Payments

878 Dues Paying Members at Briggs

272 Dues Paying members at Strattec

1150 Total Dues Paying Members

(Difference reflects members off work for lay-off, illness or other reasons)

# Membership Meeting Recap

by Tom Bishanell

The membership meeting was held on July 31, 2005 at Frank Monreal's El Matador at 9:30 a.m. President Scott Godshaw presided over the meeting. Vice President Fred Schmidt gave the Trustee report for May and Financial Secretary Treasurer Ross Winklbauer gave the Treasurer report also for May. Ross reported that there were 939 dues paying members at Briggs and 286 dues paying members at Strattec for a total of 1225 dues paying members in the month of May.

## Communications

Take note: Greg Weber received a thank you letter from the Hunger Task Force for arranging his volunteer group and sorting over 13,000 pounds of food on June 1, 2005.

The Executive Board recommended the following motions that passed:

- Send \$50 to the Milwaukee County Labor Council to help fight a re-zoning request to allow Wal-Mart to build a new Super Center in Germantown.
- Send 2 delegates to a one day woman's conference on the "Future of Women's Network" for a fee of \$20.
- Place our traditional ad in the Labor Press saluting the men and women of labor at a cost of \$110.
- Purchase \$1000 and possibly up to \$1250 worth of food and beverage coupons if needed for those that participate on Labor Day.

## Reports of Officers

President Godshaw reported that we are officially USW Local 2-232.. He reminded members that at Strattec, a contract was ratified on June 27, 2005 by a wide margin of 222 to 24. The Bargaining Committee was relentless and strong throughout the whole negotiations. Scott was happy that the committee was able to back the company off of many issues that did not appear in the final contract proposal.

Scott said the biggest question regarding the new contract at Strattec was the retiree insurance. He then reported on the new Healthy Consumer Plan which all members, active and retired, will be on as of September 1, 2005.

At Briggs, the hot topic has been negotiations. Scott reported on all the rumors and had told membership that he and Ernie Dex were meeting with Jeff Mahloch and Scott Langelin from Briggs on Thursday August 4, 2005. They were there to discuss guidelines for a possible successor labor agreement

and possible dates.

Also at Briggs, Greg Weber, Jesse Edwards, Dennis Clark and Scott Godshaw are involved in the Wellness Committee with the company. The committee will meet once a month and if anyone is interested in being on the committee, they should let one of them know. There is a grievance for an unjust discharge going to arbitration with Briggs. It will be the first arbitration case with Briggs since 1999.

Scott said at this time, there were no numbers yet regarding EVA at either company. He congratulated the incumbent stewards as well as the new stewards recently elected at both companies. Godshaw ended by stating the Health Risk Assessment would start next week at Briggs and in October at Strattec.

Mike Merrill reported that at Menomonee Falls, an update was given on the new building for the Service Division. The new plant should be done by November 2005. The move is scheduled to begin in February 2006. Mike said 10 to 14 new jobs were added to the part of the Service Division that is stationed in the north end of Burleigh. This is due to Briggs recent acquisition of Murray, Ohio and their service parts. The Micro Line run rate went down to 250 engines a day and the outboard engine was getting shut down at Burleigh and transferred to Briggs & Stratton Power Products in Jefferson.

Merrill ended his report by stating Leggett and Platt was about 2 months behind building its new die cast facility. Because of this, there had not been any layoffs as yet in die cast at Burleigh.

Greg Weber reported that production on the south end was the same and the company was looking for a pipefitter and set up people. He reminded members that Briggs was in a hiring mode and if we knew anyone that was interested to let them know. He ended his report by stating the Bargaining Committee had worked extremely hard to get a discharged member his job back and were finally successful.

Karl Schneider informed members there was a lot of speculation on the EVA. The grievance rep was no longer on 40 hours, so shop floor troubles should be handled by the steward. He ended by stating there was an insurance meeting next week and the company had sent mailers to the homes. Also the ad campaign of the Big 3 automakers has helped Strattec's production.

The next membership meeting will be held on Sunday September 18, 2005 at Frank Monreal's El Matador 9155 W. Bluemound Road at 9:30 a.m.

# Grievance Rep Reports

## Briggs & Stratton First & Third Shift

by Mike Merrill & Greg Weber

The month of June has come to pass, and the steward elections are done, and we congratulate all the stewards. We would like to thank Fred Schmidt, Dan Badzinski, Jesse Edwards and Roger Sorenson for all their help during the month of June to get the steward elections done. Third shift was the hardest, due to so many different starting times in various departments. Thanks again guys for all your help.

We also would like to let the members know, that if they have any problems, please go to your stewards. They are the first ones that should be involved, because they should know the area better than we do. If you come to the reps first, we get the stewards involved, so let the stewards do their job. They may be able to handle the situation before we would have to get involved. As far as the new stewards, we will work with you and guide you through any issues you're not familiar with.

The Mule Repair Department is no longer. The reason is that the company has decided to lease all the forklifts now, so they have no need for mule repair personnel. The supervisor is retiring, and the electrician and millwright were absorbed into the maintenance department. So there was no job loss. There is a need for a pipefitter also.

Production is still going strong on the south end. There seems to be a need for setup people. If you are interested in a setup helper position, go see what they have available.

The HRA, or Health Risk Assessment, seemed to be more popular this year. We recommend each year that people take it. You not only get a monetary benefit for doing so, you also get an idea how your health is. That gives you time to get what is out of control, back into control before something happens to you.

On July 18, 2005, the Micro Line run rate reduced to 250 from 500 per day, with a reduction of 10 operators and 1 dayworker. Some people retired and others were absorbed into other assembly areas.

The spray line was done at the end of July. So there will be no more painting of service parts or outboards at Briggs and Stratton in Milwaukee.

As of August 19, 2005, all outboard production has stopped at the Burleigh plant and is in the process of being moved to Power Products in Jefferson.

The Special Equipment Dept. 138 is a little slow, so they posted a voluntary layoff for up to 4 people. The Company told us it's expected to last about 4 to 6 weeks until they get some more work in.

The Service Division Management met with their employees on July 26, 2005 for the update on the new building and the upcoming move. November looks like the time frame the building will be finished, then they have to prep the building with lights, racking, RF, etc. In February of 2006, they will start moving in phases and completion is set for around July of 2006. With Briggs buying Murray, much of the north end of the Burleigh Plant is dedicated to service parts. Five people were added to get that work in and they sometimes bring in extras to help out as needed. It's real busy right now at the Service Division, that it's been very hard to get our members vacation time. Management claims that after August of 2005, they will be

## Briggs & Stratton Second Shift

by Jesse Edwards

### Job posting

The union met with the company about filling open jobs and the results of that meeting is the company will start posting open jobs on the bulletin boards. This way our members will be informed before the company hires from the outside.

### Service Division

The company is currently interviewing for the position of DC 3 labor grade 18 and Material Handler labor grade 22. At this time they have openings for a total of 14 positions. They are adding employees due to the increase in volume from Murray and Home Depot.

### August 1st Increases

On August 1, 2005 you received a 3% pay increase and your disability (S&A) benefits are \$335.00 per week.

### Mandatory Saturday

Mandatory Saturdays start in September. I hope you were keeping track of your mandatories. The company can post 14 mandatory Saturdays per calendar year.

### Coils

The assemble plastic job is scheduled to be eliminated on or around September 6, 2005. This job was already being performed on the outside. The company brought this job in to take a look at it. Since then they decided it was not feasible to keep this job in house and has now decided to leave this job outside. No one was laid off because of this job being eliminated. The company also stated that orders were steady and to meet production requirements they would need to work overtime.

### Die Cast

The Die Cast business looks strong until November 1, 2005. That's when the first Die cast machine is scheduled to be moved out. Some members have transferred out before their jobs were eliminated. Currently they have about 11 setup and 13 tenders per shift. There are members in this group schedule to retire. Also, The model 20 production has increased.

### Laborfest

Labor Day is the day when unions across the country celebrate labor. This will be the 30th year celebration, Monday September 5, 2005 at the summerfest grounds. See you there.

In Solidarity,  
Jesse Edwards

able to get some more of our members off on vacation, when things start to settle down.

In June, the Bargaining Committee was successful in getting a discharged member back.

The Company informed us on August 17, 2005 that they will be outsourcing the department 105 janitorial services, due to cost effectiveness. There are currently 26 janitors that will be affected. They will be receiving WARN notices. As per a Letter of Intent in our contract, the company has the right to do this after July 31, 2005.

We hope to see you all at Laborfest on September 5, 2005 down at the Summerfest grounds.

In Solidarity,  
Mike Merrill and Greg Weber

## UPCOMING EVENTS



**September 5- Labor Day**

**September 18- Membership Meeting**



**October 10- Columbus Day**

**October 30- Daylight Savings ends**



**November 11- Veteran's Day**

## LOCAL 2-232 REPORTER

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LOCAL 2-232 UNITED STEEL, PAPER AND FORESTRY, RUBBER,  
MANUFACTURING, ENERGY, ALLIED INDUSTRIAL AND SERVICE  
WORKERS

INTERNATIONAL UNION

*Representing employees of Briggs & Stratton Corp. and  
Strattec Security Corp.*

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The information contained herein is of informal nature and  
is not intended to be final and authoritative.

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Greg Weber, Jesse Edwards, Tom Bishanell

Strattec Bargaining Committee: Scott Godshaw, Karl Schneider,  
Dennis Nowak, Al Olivares

## Grievance Rep Reports

### Strattec Security

by Karl Schneider

Sisters and Brothers:

I hope everyone has had a safe summer up to this point. The schedule continues to be strong as most production areas are currently working over-time.

#### Tech IV Openings

The company has re-hired a former member and currently has a few Tech IV openings. The original postings were for recent retirees. As members transfer to posted jobs, the company, per Article VIII Section 11- Transfers (d), does not have to post subsequent openings. The openings will be filled through transfers on file before hiring from the outside.

#### New Insurance Plan

The new insurance plan will go into effect on September 1, 2005. Remember, this is not an open enrollment. You will have to start all over with the deductibles.

#### Laborfest

I hope to see everyone at Laborfest on Labor Day Monday September 5, 2005.

#### Heartwarming Experience

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for all the support they have shown to our recent fire victim. It is heartwarming to see all the people coming together to help in this members' tragedy and time of need.

In Solidarity,  
Karl Schneider

#### Special Thanks to the Many Members Who Assisted Member after Fire

The Friends of Community Services would like to give special thanks to the many members who made donations to assist a member whose apartment and possessions were destroyed by fire. People provided furniture and appliances to help the member set up a new household. The generosity was overwhelming. We cannot and will not list the names of the several people who helped, because we would overlook someone.

It is good to know that our members are so caring and generous. On behalf of the Friends of Community Services, and the member you assisted -

**THANK YOU!**

Dolores Higgins

Chairperson Community Services Committee

## Briggs Retiree Club

Our June and July picnics were enjoyed by many.

On August 18th, we will be visiting Briggs and Stratton on 124th and Burleigh. We will be taking a tour and also be served a luncheon. Doors open at 11. The tour and luncheon will start at noon.

In October, we will begin our regular events on the second and third Wednesdays. We will have bingo on the 2nd Wednesday and our regular meeting on the 3rd Wednesday. Doors once again will open at 11 a.m. and the event will start at noon. All of our events will be at VFW Post #449 on 124th Street. Remember to bring your birthday or anniversary treats on the 3rd Wednesday.

Just a reminder, you must be a paid up member to attend any of our events. Dues are \$24 a year. If you have any questions regarding dues please call Erma Gorecki, our Financial Secretary Treasurer, for more information at 262-781-8951.

Please join us in sending out our get well wishes to Ida Hanson, Ann Schmidt and Virginia Klamik.

All of you retirees, come and join our Retiree Club. You will be able to see some old friends and possibly meet some new ones as well. You will be glad you did.

If you have a computer at home or access to one, you can read this report along with the whole **Reporter** on the internet on the Union's website [www.pace7232.org](http://www.pace7232.org).

There will be fun for all when you attend all of our events. Join our club. Bingo is free and there is always prize money awarded. Door prizes at other times also.

Hope to see you all at our coming events. Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Take care and God Bless,  
Frances P. Capello  
Corresponding Secretary  
262-251-7514

**Join the Briggs Retiree Club  
today call Erma Gorecki 262-  
781-8951 for information**

## ASK YOUR LAWYER

by Thomas Flanagan

*Previant, Goldberg, Uelman, Gratz, Miller &  
Brueggeman, S.C.*

### Retirement and Low Back Degeneration

After a lifetime of bending, twisting, turning, and lifting, employees in jobs requiring these activities find themselves at retirement wondering whether their sore backs, including occasional pain down the legs are caused by their work. Causation is a medical question. Some doctors, no matter what work history you provide them, will say "we all get arthritis," and will find your condition not to be work related. Other doctors, if given the proper history, documenting the length of time, the weights involved, and the quantity of lifting over the course of days, weeks, and years, may very well determine that the arthritis on the spin was advanced by work exposure.

Therefore, if you are thinking of retiring because of a bad back, you should make a point of consulting your doctor in this matter, especially if you are retiring early because of a back condition. You may be entitled to not only social security disability, but benefits under the worker's compensation law for loss of earnings capacity and even permanent total disability.

If you have questions about worker's compensation, personal injury, or social security disability, please feel free to call the Previant, Goldberg, Uelmen, Gratz, Miller & Brueggeman law firm at 414-271-4500 or toll free at 1-800-841-5232.

## Local 2-232 Legal Clinic

**Do you have legal questions or problems facing you or your family? Have you suffered a major personal injury? If you have, or if you have any other legal problem, Local 2-232 is providing free legal consultations with lawyers from the law firm of Previant, Goldberg, Uelman, Gratz, Miller & Brueggeman at the Local 2-232 Union office, 8500 W. Capitol Dr. Legal clinic hours: 1:00P.M. to 4:00P.M. First Monday of the month. Call for an appointment 414-463-7425.**

# State Budget Process Proves Value of Solidarity

by Phillip L. Neuenfeldt, Secretary-Treasurer, Wisconsin State AFL-CIO

The one truth we must always remember during current discussions about the future of the labor movement is the imperative of solidarity. The victories we achieved during the recent state budget process proved the value of working families sticking together all over again.

A lot of the media coverage was about who got credit for being more fiscally conservative. But beyond the usual spectacle of partisan struggle between the two parties, something more significant happened along the way.

The Wisconsin State AFL-CIO and our affiliated unions focused on upholding our core values of respecting work and strengthening families. By sticking together and staying true to our values, we scored important victories in our campaign for working families and our goal of developing family-sustaining jobs.

Here are the highlights of the state budget:

- Corporate Accountability:** Both parties ultimately approved a provision in the state budget that requires any business receiving grants, loans or tax credits from state government to promote economic development, and then moves those jobs out of Wisconsin within five years, to repay the entire amount of the benefit.

- Public Sector Jobs:** This budget proposal called for the elimination of numerous public sector jobs. By working in a bipartisan fashion, the State AFL-CIO and our affiliates were able to work with leaders in the Legislature to restore 130 health care jobs, 35 forestry jobs, and numerous case managers for BadgerCare, SSI and other programs. The Legislature preserved the Governor's proposal to add staff at State Veterans Homes as well. But in the final hours of the budget debate, the Legislature sought to institute a 2.3% across-the-board cut. Fortunately, Governor Doyle vetoed this last-minute maneuver.

- Privatization:** In another late-night move, the Republicans sought to privatize 32 heating, cooling and wastewater treatment plants and their employees at public facilities. (This to be another example of the impact of privatization efforts.) The sale of these assets would have brought in new revenue on a one-time basis, but a study conducted for the previous administration of Governor Tommy Thompson found that for-profit operation of these facilities could be actually raising the cost for taxpayers over the long term. The proposal was bad public policy and was vetoed as well.

- Apprenticeships:** The Republican-controlled Joint Finance Committee of the Legislature eliminated additional funds for our highly regarded apprenticeship system without realizing the negative impact. The State AFL-CIO alerted our building trades affiliates and we sprang into action, working with the Republican leadership to restore the funding increase proposed by the Governor. This incident clearly demonstrated how important it is for working families to have an active presence and voice in the state budget process.

- Temp Agencies:** The temp industry worked with Republicans to introduce a special interest tax break into the budget. Temp jobs are much less likely to offer health benefits and pensions than permanent, full-time jobs. The tax break would have given temp agencies even more of an advantage, and created an incentive for their customers to replace family-sustaining jobs with temp jobs. Fortunately, the Governor vetoed this tax break for special interest.

- Industrial Jobs:** Governor Doyle proposed more support for the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership to

help more small enterprises modernize, but the Joint Finance Committee removed the additional funds from the budget. The Wisconsin State AFL-CIO has supported a separate bill to restore much of the additional funding, and we remain hopeful that Republicans will join Democrats in supporting higher paying industrial jobs in our state.

- Health Insurance:** Republican leaders supported tax credits for health savings accounts that cover the out-of-pocket costs associated with high deductible health insurance plans. This approach to health insurance would undermine broader risk pools for comprehensive group plans, and actually drive up the cost of traditional plans for both employers and employees. Governor Doyle vetoed this assault on comprehensive group health plans.

- Minimum Wage:** After a protracted struggle, a compromise between the Doyle administration and the Republican Legislature resulted in a 26% increase in the minimum wage. We strongly opposed the provision that prevents local units of government from raising the minimum wage within their jurisdictions, although we should not lose sight of the magnitude of the statewide raise for the lowest paid workers in the state.

- Technical Colleges:** Governor Doyle continued to demonstrate a strong commitment to our highly regarded technical college system. His veto of deep cuts preserved the capacity of our technical colleges to help working families acquire the skills they need to be successful in a changing economy.

- Public Schools:** The Republican-controlled Legislature proposed deep cuts in the proposed spending for public education. Governor Doyle vetoed nearly all the cuts to preserve the quality of our schools.

The labor movement is proud of these important gains for working families. The lesson is that when working families stand together, we can make a major difference in state government. When we have a voice in the state capitol, we can hold elected officials accountable for the core values of respecting work, strengthening families, and to the preservation and development of family supporting jobs.

Working families need a voice now more than ever. The radical wing of the Republican Party wants to roll back all the gains working families have made over the last century. They want to destroy Social Security. They want to destroy public education. They want to make everyone pay for health insurance on their own. They want to shift the tax burden to those who are least able to pay. They just don't want to be honest about it.

Instead they cloak their attack on working families in rhetoric about a new ownership society. They prey on the aspirations of working families to acquire wealth as well as the common sense notions of personal responsibility for the choices people make in their own lives. But the new ownership society is actually a very old idea. It is the idea that the business community has no responsibility to provide health benefits and pensions. It is the idea that the wealthy have no obligation to pay a fair share of taxes for government programs. Indeed, it is the idea that the government has no business doing anything of consequence for working families.

The State AFL-CIO and our affiliated unions are committed to building a more decent society for working families. We believe in a more moral society that respects the dignity and value of work, and strengthens working families in our communities.