



# News Update

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Sponsors</i>	2
<i>Sutter Court Negotiations</i>	2
<i>Health Care Reform</i>	3
<i>Contact Info &amp; Tickets</i>	4
<i>Calendar of Events</i>	4
<i>Laysan Albatross &amp; Plastic</i>	4



## Mission

## Statement

To represent and assist public employees in their quest to improve their wages and working conditions and to ensure their rights are protected.

## SCEA Members Asked to Forego COLA

BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GARY STUCKY

Sutter County has stood out amongst comparable agencies as a fiscally sound agency, which has managed its resources well. A key factor that led to Sutter County's enviable position was the wise decision to divert CalPERS contributions into reserves during years when the stock market was flying high and CalPERS wasn't requiring normal contributions. Most agencies decided to use these funds for normal operations and paid dearly when the stock market returned to a more normal level of interest earnings.

So if the County has millions in reserve why are SCEA members being asked to give up the scheduled salary increase later this year? An SCEA Committee composed of Robert Ahu, Terry Barber, Alice Williams-Root, Ray Hogan, Kurt Schoenwald, Ben Harper and Gary Stucky met with County Administrator Larry Combs and County representatives to better understand the basis for the County's request.

In summary, the County

believes (along with others) that even though the State Legislature has passed a budget, a major portion of the State deficit is once again resolved by smoke and mirrors. The State's failure to take responsible action will result in the State going through a second round of cuts this fall and perhaps a third round again early next year. The economic recovery is a big factor. Up until the eleventh hour the State was set to take the County's Highway User Taxes. While they did not outright take this money (likely because they knew they would lose a court challenge) payments to the Counties will be delayed beginning July 31 until January 2010. Local government is also being given a choice of taking less property taxes revenue up front or waiting to receive the funds later with interest. This action is being taken under the provisions of Prop 1-A and the details are not yet real clear. While the County's unallocated reserves can back-fill these hits on the short-term, these reserves are one time funds accumulated over years. Once spent they

are gone and hard to reestablish.

If the State does not develop a means to finance State mandated programs, then the State will have no other choice but to make additional cuts in programs. An example of things to come are reflected in the Governor's line item veto causing these additional cuts made after the Legislature adopted the budget:

-- Nearly \$80 million in cuts to child welfare services that will impact the number of social workers available to investigate abuse claims.

-- \$52 million in cuts to AIDS services, eliminating all state support except for medication and epidemic surveillance.

-- \$50 million for the Healthy Families program, which will result in children being removed from the program.

-- Plus the elimination of the "Williamson Act", which

(Continued on page 2)

## Sponsors

**Join AAA** and the one time enrollment fee of \$17 will be waived. (742-5531)

Tell them you are a member of the Sutter/Yuba County Employees' Association, Local #1.

**Pelton's Party Rental & Sales** - Offers 10% discount on retail items. (674-2790)

**Muffler Masters** - Offers 10% discount on services and parts. (674-7030)

**Diamond Palace Super Store** - Offers 5% price reduction on all purchases and \$2.00 off any jewelry repair job. (743-1815)

**Richard's Tree Service** - Offers 10% discount. (673-7993)

**D Street Salon** - Offers 15% discount on services. (743-4555)

**Curves of Marysville** - \$39 sign up fee and the monthly membership fee is only \$39 per month. (743-5808)

**The Country Florist** - Set up an account with The Country Florist and receive a 10% discount (excludes out of town orders). (743-7387)

**Bounce Central** - Inflatable party rentals and concession machines! Offers 10% discount. Yuba City (870-8515) bouncecentralonline.com

**Manuel's Smog & Auto Repair** - Official smog test and repair station. Manuel Saldana Jr. - Owner/ASE Certified Mechanic/Smog Technician. Offers 10% discount or \$5.00 off smog inspections. Marysville (742-0304)

## Sutter County Court Negotiations Update

BY BUSINESS AGENT MARIE CLARK

SCEA, Local 1 and Sutter County Court commenced negotiations in the middle of May and at this time we only have three proposals that we are working out the language on. The Union negotiations team consists of Business Agent Marie Clark, Court Clerks Danette Able and Maria Carmona with alternates Sal Rodriguez and Shara Hunter. The Court is represented by Laura Davis and Karen Smith.

This is a difficult year for negotiations due to the financial status of the State. Some courts are requiring court closure days while other courts are furloughing their employees at least one

day a month to save money. At this point, the Sutter Courts may do a court closure day once a month, but not a furlough day. A court closure day is a day that the employees work, but the court is not open to the public that day. A court furlough day is when the employees would be required to have a certain day off without pay.

These are the proposals that we have tentatively agreed upon: an increase in the tuition reimbursement paid annually; a flex workday schedule if an employee meets a certain criteria; modification of the dress code; increases in bereavement leave; usage of

sick leave while on vacation due to an emergency for you, your spouse or child; a communication/access policy; and a floating day off in lieu of working on Lincoln Day. The Court has agreed to allow Suggestion Boxes in the break rooms and to replace florescent lights with blue lights when needed.

Your Sutter County Court Negotiations team has scheduled another meeting with our membership to give the membership input on negotiations on Friday, August 7, 2009, from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at the Marysville Mountain Mike's. We hope all Sutter Court members will attend this meeting.

## SCEA Members Asked to Forego COLA

BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GARY STUCKY

*(Continued from page 1)*

will have a significant affect on Sutter County.

The County remains committed to not laying off employees or asking employees to take furlough days. This includes making every effort to find alternative employment should the State cut entire programs, but the ability to honor this commitment is based upon the severity of the cuts and how long the County's

reserves can last.

Over the weeks ahead SCEA will be scheduling meetings to discuss this matter with the membership and answer questions. Any change to the contract must be approved by the membership. Your SCEA Committee will be meeting with the County to discuss options and alternatives. Please watch for meeting announcements and plan to attend meetings to become better informed about the matter.

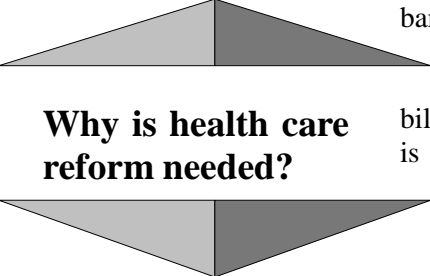
### Yuba County Budget

Much of what is discussed in the previous paragraphs will apply to Yuba County as well. Now that the State legislature has acted and the Governor has signed off on the latest attempt to forestall a major crisis, your YCEA Budget Committee will be meeting with the County to determine the impact of the many different bills (27) passed as a part of the budget.

# Health Care Reform – Will it Happen and at What Price?

BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GARY STUCKY

Most experts now agree that our Health Care System is in crisis and that Americans are paying more but realizing worse outcomes from the healthcare we receive. Prior to the General Elections last year it appeared that Americans were prepared to accept major reforms and agreed that major reforms are necessary. However, as Congress put together the details of the needed legislation, progress has bogged down and the possibility of realizing needed reform is in question.



## Why is health care reform needed?

Not only do we have the highest infant mortality rate amongst industrialized nations, we spend a majority of the healthcare dollars in the system on treatment of chronic illness rather than prevention and management and our hospitals are under siege by those needing care but who have no health insurance. It was recently reported in the Sacramento Bee that

Hospitals across California last year “wrote off” nearly \$1.2 billion in bad debt and provided an additional \$973.4 million in charity care. This represents an 89% increase over just four years earlier.

Charity care is not free and unpaid bills do not simply disappear, a good portion of this bad debt gets passed on to paying customers or insurance companies. The result is higher premium rates for those with health insurance coverage. The Bee article also reported that 62% of all personal bankruptcies in 2007 were partly blamed on unaffordable medical bills. What was startling is that three-fourths of those debtors had health insurance.

For true reform to become a reality, most agree that at least four fundamental principles of change must occur. Regulations to control costs and delivery of care, mandates that would require everyone to be covered, subsidies to ensure broad participation by individuals and compliance by employers and competition to private insurance companies by offering an

alternative to the private plans. One of the main sticking points is over whether the competition should be in the form of a government operated plan or a cooperative plan (details not clear) and of course, how to fund the costs. On paper it appears that there is sufficient savings that could be realized to offset the cost, if our overall health care system was better managed and funds were directed to prevention rather than treatment.

One part of the debate that could affect all our members is whether health insurance benefit costs paid by the employer should be subject to taxation. Congress has been considering several possible methods for applying taxes to these benefits. One method referred to as “dollar cap” would tax employer contributions above a certain level such as \$14,000 for family coverage. Another option referred to as an “actuarial value cap” would tax the full employer contribution if the plan benefits exceeded a certain level of generosity. The last option under discussion called “dollar floor” works the opposite of the cap. Taxes would be applied to

coverage paid by the employer up to a certain dollar amount. The last option would almost ensure that taxes would be applied to all employer sponsored health plans and would do nothing to control costs or curb excessive plan benefits.

At this time, it remains unclear whether the taxation of healthcare benefits will become a reality. While these benefits have been a sacred cow for workers who enjoy employer sponsored health care benefits. In reality, each of us has been paying for the healthcare of others who are uninsured. We pay not through taxation but through higher premiums charged by insurance companies who pay the inflated costs charged by providers who have been unable to collect on unpaid medical bills or charity care. Maybe the time has come for a more transparent system, which would eliminate the ability of insurance companies and providers from playing the numbers game. The bottom-line is if our elected leaders do not find a way to work through their differences and bring about meaningful reform the healthcare we do enjoy today may be at risk tomorrow.

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## TICKETS

DISCOVERY KINGDOM \$27

SUNSPASH \$18

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS \$57

Please call the office before you come in  
[sycea.org/parkdeals.htm](http://sycea.org/parkdeals.htm)



The California State Fair runs from August 21–September 7 this year. Discount prices are available May 15–August 19.

[www.bigfun.org/GeneralInfo/store.asp](http://www.bigfun.org/GeneralInfo/store.asp)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Local #1 Board Mtg – Tues @ 7:30 pm.** August 4

*Held at Local #1 Martinez Union Hall - Local #1 Board members attend*

**SCEA Site Rep Mtg —Thurs @ noon** August 6

*S/YCEA Association Office—Site Reps attend*

**SCEA Board of Directors' Mtg — Mon @ noon** August 17

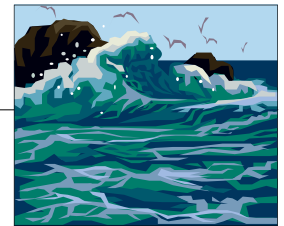
*S/YCEA Association Office—Board members attend*

**YCEA SR/Member Mtg — Thurs @ 11:30—1:30** August 20

*Kai/Goldfields Rooms/Packard Building-Site Reps/Members attend  
(A bulletin will be distributed before the meeting.)*

**YCEA Board of Directors' Mtg – Wed @ noon** August 26

*Held at the S/YCEA Association Office—Board members attend*



## Laysan Albatross & Plastics — Monterey Bay Aquarium

“used with permission”

### THE PROBLEM

In the middle of the North Pacific Ocean, on a tiny island 1,000 miles from the nearest big city, about 40% of the Laysan albatross chicks born each year die because their bellies are full of bottle caps, toothbrushes and other plastic. Many people think that the biggest source of pollution in the oceans is oil spilled from ships, but most marine pollution is litter that starts out on land. By making changes now, we can reduce the amount of plastic that gets into our oceans in the months and years to come.

### A DEADLY DIET

Albatrosses fly hundreds, sometimes thousands of miles in search of food for their chicks. They look for squid and fish eggs floating on the surface of the water. Unfortunately, plastic floats, and Laysan albatross are particularly attracted to it. They eat it, mistaking it for food, then they fly back to the nest and feed bottle caps, lighters, fishing lures and other pieces of plastic to their young. The chicks starve to death, with stomachs full of plastic.

### TRASH TRAVELS

Trash that's dropped on the ground doesn't stay put. Even hundreds of miles from the ocean, trash is washed by rain into city storm drains and out into streams and rivers that lead to the ocean. From there, wind and currents carry our trash far out to sea. Scientists estimate that around the world, up to one million seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals and sea turtles die each year from eating plastic. We can help keep trash from traveling by recycling and putting trash in trash cans.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. Limit your use of disposable plastics, like plastic bags and water bottles.
2. Carry your own reusable shopping bag and/or water bottle.
3. Look for products made from recycled materials that have little or no packaging, or packaging that is recyclable.
4. Try to avoid Styrofoam products—bring your own mug to the coffee shop, and a container for leftovers when you eat out.
5. Know which plastics can be recycled in your city and recycle!
6. Make sure all non-recyclable plastics are securely disposed of.
7. Pick up trash on the street and put it in a trash can.

Go to [www.montereybayaquarium.org](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org) to view a clear plastic tube containing the contents of the stomach of a Laysan Albatross carcass. Go to the site click “Save the Oceans”, click “Take Action”, scroll to the article near the bottom of the page and click “Learn More”. You won't believe it!