

# News Update



Representing Public Employees in  
City of Colusa, Sutter and Yuba Counties

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## 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.

## SUTTER COUNTY BUDGET/SCEA CONTRACT DISCUSSIONS

BY GARY STUCKY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Staff attended the recent County budget hearings to monitor projected revenues and proposed expenditures for the next fiscal year. Unfortunately, the revenue projections continue to look dismal and the meager recovery has been attributed to short-term infusion of stimulus federal funds and other limited growth in revenue. The basic ongoing General Fund revenue sources of sales taxes and property taxes continue to be either stagnant or declining. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) took a very conservative posture while

realizing that the County needs to continue to function and carry on the business of the County.

It became clear that the BOS remain concerned about the County's finances and that the BOS is committed to using the County's reserves to maintain operations without cutting staffing levels for the next several years. It was also clear that a major assumption that the BOS was making related to this year's budget was that employees would again defer the scheduled salary increases. Additionally, the BOS made

it clear by their comments that they wish to seek changes to the pension plans, including having employees pay all or a portion of the employee's CalPERS contribution.

The County's preliminary budget has been approved, but it is contingent on the salary increases for SCEA Local #1 members and the DSA not being taken this year. The budget also assumes that the County will spend down about \$4 million of reserves (which is the amount that the County is

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## CCEA, LOCAL 1 CONTRACT RATIFICATION

BY BUSINESS AGENT MARIE CLARK

The City of Colusa Employees' Association (CCEA) ratified a one-year agreement with the City of Colusa. This was a long and tenuous process. The CCEA, Local 1 negotiations team had to stand strong against the City's idea that employees must agree to many take-a-ways. When the City realized that

negotiations are a give and take process for both sides and that negotiations did not have to be contentious, the process went much smoother.

Here is what was finally agreed upon: **COLA**-Employees will receive a 2% COLA retroactive to July 1, 2010;-All employees will

work 36 hours per week, but paid for 40 hours and most will have a 4/9 work schedule with Friday's off; **Boot Allowance**-Increase in boot allowance to \$100 per year plus if the supervisor directs the employee to purchase an additional pair due to excessive wear and tear, then this pair of boots

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## CCEA, LOCAL 1 CONTRACT RATIFICATION

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will also be reimbursed; **Call Back Time**-Call back time for on-call duties will be 15 minutes, but if the employee is required to return to work, then 60 minutes is the allowable timeframe to do so; **Reemployment List**-During the first year the City will offer employment to the person with the greatest seniority if there is a vacancy. During the second year the department head must interview and fully consider any employee on a valid reemployment preference list if an opening is available; **Bereavement Leave**-Bereavement leave was increased to five days of any leave time available that the employee wishes to use; **Out of Class Pay**-Employees assigned to work out of class shall receive five percent (5%) acting pay on the eleventh (11th) day of that

assignment This does not have to be consecutive days; **Pay for Performance**-(PPF) Salary increases of 0-15% will commence in October 2011 after the annual evaluation and a recommendation of the supervisor, equity adjustments will also be available if the funds are available; **Health Insurance**-Employees will have a fully paid health benefit of Blue Shield EPO plus dental and vision for employee only. If an employee opts for a less expensive plan than this, than they may take ½ of the remaining stipend as a contribution to a 457 Account or 40% of the remaining stipend in cash; **PERS Pension for Employees Hired after 7/1/10**-Miscellaneous employees hired after July 1, 2010 shall participate in the CalPERS 2% @ 60 plan with the employee paying 100% of the employee

contribution and calculations based on the highest 36 months of service. The annual post retirement COLA will be set at 2%; **Holiday Entitlement**-Lincoln and Washington's birthday will be combined into Presidents Day, and the members agreed to give up Columbus Day and the Group Holiday; **Salary Survey Agreements**-The Union and the City have agreed to use the following cities for purposes of the salary survey: Corning, Gridley, Live Oak, Orland, Williams, Winters, and Yuba City. All previous salary studies and HRP increases will be deleted.

*Please take the time to thank your negotiations team of Glen Sturdevant, Toni Benson, Walt Sweeney, John Balderrama and alternate Sandy Cabral for their hard work and commitment to securing a fair contract.*

## SUTTER COUNTY BUDGET

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expecting to spend per year to offset the loss of revenues associated with sales and property taxes).

An error made in the allocation of sales tax revenue discovered several months ago requiring a repayment of \$1.7 million (plus interest), has compounded the problem this year. This error also required an adjustment to the County's projected income for the current fiscal year and next. This error is the primary reason prompting the County to

seek further deferral of the negotiated salary increases.

The SCEA Committee appointed by President Kurt Schoenwald has been meeting with the County to discuss the County's financial position and possible ways that employees might be able to assist. SCEA has not opened our contract and SCEA will not make any changes without the membership's approval. The Committee has communicated the position of the SCEA Board that the County needs to come to

the table and be specific about what they are asking us to do and what they are willing to do in exchange for any concessions they are asking for. SCEA is also working to coordinate meetings with the DSA and Professional Fire Fighters' Association to discuss how we can work together during these challenging times.

We will be holding meetings soon to brief the membership more specifically on developments. **Please make an effort to attend.**

## AMUSEMENT PARK TICKETS -

The Association has **Discovery Kingdom** tickets for \$26, **Legoland** tickets for \$62 (this is the resort hopper), and **Universal Studios** for \$60. We take Visa, MasterCard, Debit Cards, and cash for these tickets. **SunSplash** tickets are available for \$19, but you must have cash and it must be almost the exact amount because we do not have a lot of change.

## YCEA MEMBERS APPROVE CONTRACT ADDENDUM

BY GARY STUCKY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Yuba County continues to wrestle with a \$7 million structural budget problem. During the booming economy several years ago, the County made strong efforts to improve their competitive edge amongst regional public-sector employers. Now that we are in the grip of a very deep recession, the tax revenue is not sufficient to support the County's expenses, which is largely made up of labor costs. Through discussions with the County, YCEA Local #1 worked to secure the best possible conditions for a contract addendum that provides continued protection of our members' rights and benefits. Concessions and/or staff reductions are never easy. Unfortunately as much as we would like to protect our members, the reality of this current economy does not make that possible.

When it became clear that even after 45 layoffs further layoffs would be necessary if the County implemented the previously agreed to contract provision requiring the

County to pay the employee CalPERS contribution of 7%, the YCEA Board of Directors recommended the elimination of this contractual obligation and a restructuring of our contract. At a membership meeting on Wednesday, June 30, 2010, the terms and conditions of the proposed addendum were reviewed with the membership and any questions answered. Subsequent to the meeting members were allowed to cast ballots at the meeting and over the course of the following several days at different times and locations. Members cast 381 ballots, 243 ballots were cast to approve the addendum and 138 ballots were cast to not reopen the contract.

The addendum agreement extends the contract to June 30, 2014, in addition to eliminating the County's obligation as noted above. There will be no general salary increase until July 1, 2013, when a 5% salary adjustment will be implemented. However, employees will continue to receive merit and longevity

salary adjustments. The County will continue to pay 80% of any health insurance premium increase for dependent coverage and 100% for employee only. The parties have agreed to suspend for the term of the contract the contract provision that allows employees to convert excess vacation to their deferred compensation plan. Maximum vacation accruals were increased to 350 hours for those previously capped at 240 hours. The parties agreed to implement a new longevity pay plan for employees hired after July 1, 2013, which will provide for a seven step salary schedule with 5% between each step. The new pay system will then provide one longevity step of 5% after the employee has completed 15 years of service. The addendum agreement also contains an Equal Treatment provision, which provides that if the County implements a general salary increase or the equivalent for any other group of employees that our members will likewise benefit.

## DISTRACTED DRIVING CAMPAIGN



In today's overwhelmingly busy society, with ever increasing demands on our personal and professional time, learning to juggle multiple tasks at once is something we all must face on a daily basis. While it is not clear whether or not multitasking is effective or if it costs more time than it saves, multitasking while driving has sparked a national debate about distracted driving and the latest statistics prove that not focusing on the road can be deadly.

One of the most widespread forms of distracted driving, cell phone usage, has some alarming statistics. According to a Carnegie Mellon study, driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by

37 percent, and a report from the National Safety Council reported that 28 percent of traffic accidents are caused by people talking on cell phones or sending text messages.

"Stopping distracted driving is a major initiative that we are undertaking, and one that we believe will make our roads significantly safer. While there are many forms of distracted driving, an obvious distraction for most people is using a cell phone while driving," said LaHood. "We are working with states across the nation to pass legislation that authorizes law enforcement to stop and cite drivers who are texting while driving—one of the most dangerous forms of distracted driving."

Texting is of heightened concern because it combines three types of distraction – visual, taking the eyes off the road; manual, taking the hands off the wheel; and cognitive, taking the mind off the road. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves.

While cell phones are a major focus of the distracted driving campaign, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is encouraging people not to do any other task while driving, as distracted driving is any non-driving activity a per-

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# AUGUST CALENDAR

Representing Public Employees in City of Colusa, Sutter and Yuba Counties

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Phone: 530 674-0185  
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[sycea.org](http://sycea.org)

<b>SCEA Site Rep Meeting</b> — <i>Thursday at noon</i>	August 5
<i>Held at the SYCEA Association Office—Board members attend</i>	
<b>YCEA Site Rep Meeting</b> — <i>Tuesday at noon</i>	August 10
<i>Held at the SYCEA Association Office - Site Reps attend</i>	
<b>SCEA Board of Directors’ Meeting</b> — <i>Monday at noon</i>	August 16
<i>Held at the SYCEA Association Office—Board members attend</i>	
<b>Local #1 Board Meeting</b> – <i>Tuesday at 7:30 pm.</i>	August 17
<i>Held at Local #1 Sacramento Union Hall - Local #1 Board members attend</i>	
<b>YCEA Board of Directors’ Meeting</b> – <i>Wednesday at noon</i>	August 25
<i>Held at the SYCEA Association Office—Board members attend</i>	

## Viewpoints: CalPERS uses realistic estimate in calculating pension funding

Pension funds, unfortunately, are not immune from global economic forces. It should not be a surprise that the funded status of pension plans has declined.

Unfortunately, several recent studies have muddied the waters by exaggerating pension liabilities. These studies were not conducted by pension experts or actuaries but by academics or think tanks with an ideological bent.

For 78 years, CalPERS has been using an accounting method that adheres to governmental accounting standards and is consistent with actuarial best practices. We assume an average

annual investment return of 7.75 percent, a target that has been achieved over the last 20 years despite two recession years.

A recent study by Callan Associates found the investment assumptions of public pension plans are consistent with historical experience.

Nevertheless, CalPERS is currently engaged in a top-to-bottom review of our asset allocation and our

investment return assumptions. Part of that effort includes reaching out to a wide-ranging group of experts with varied opinions on asset allocation and the assumed rate of return.

CalPERS believes a debate over public employee retirement benefits is healthy. But the debate should be based on sound assumptions and facts. Unfortunately, exaggerating pension liabilities to scare the public and policymakers is not.

*Special to The Bee, Published Tuesday, Jul. 20, 2010-Alan Milligan, Chief Actuary, CalPERS*



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son engages in that has the potential to distract him or her from the primary task of driving and increases the risk of crashing. This can include using a cell phone, eating and drinking, grooming, tuning the radio or even talking to passengers.

In 2008, nearly 6,000 people lost their lives and an estimated 515,000 people were injured in police-reported crashes in which at least one form of driver distraction was reported

on the police crash report.

To tackle this ever-increasing problem, NHTSA is focusing on ways to change the behavior of drivers through legislation, enforcement, public awareness and education—the same tactics that have curbed drinking and driving and increased seat belt use.

“Decades of experience with drunk driving and getting people to buckle up has taught us it takes a consistent combination

of education, effective enforcement, a committed judiciary and collective efforts by local, state and national advocates to put a dent in the problem,” said LaHood.

NHTSA’s message is simple—“Put It Down”; and it’s one that isn’t going to go away anytime in the near future. With supporters ranging from President Obama to Oprah and legislation passing across the nation to discourage distracted driving, drivers will hopefully get the message loud and clear, just like

with the drunk driving and seat-belt campaigns that have helped make the roads safer.

So the next time you are pressed for time, and you consider multitasking while you’re driving, remember that the best multitasker knows that some things require your undivided attention, and you must know when you should put other things aside and focus your energy on the task at hand. Driving is definitely one of those times.

[www.distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov)