

IFPTE LOCAL 12, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard CESO Trip Report Spring 2008, Washington D.C.

IFPTE CESO Representatives: Tonya Shuler & Dan Schlesener

On Tuesday, April 29th, many CESO members joined NASHTU (The National Association of State Highway and Transportation Unions) at their Legislative Reception in the Capitol building. A number of legislators made an appearance and voiced their support for unions. This was an excellent opportunity for networking, and we took full advantage of that during the reception and with dinner following.

On Wednesday, April 30th, the CESO meetings officially began. Executive Committee & Legislative Reports were given to the group. One item of note from the CESO Executive Committee is the plan to change to three CESO meetings per year in 2009, adding a Winter meeting in January to the Spring and Fall meetings. New business was discussed and the CESO leadership thought it imperative that we come up with five working principles as goals for CESO. Attachment 1 gives an overview of these principles or goals. Unit reports were given and discussed. In these unit reports, each union voiced their main concerns and/or high points that each of our unions are facing. Attachment 2 is an overview of what IFPTE Local 12 presented. Matt Biggs, IFPTE Legislative Director, was CESO's speaker this year, and he gave an "Inside the Beltway" overview and provided background on legislative contacts for Thursday's meetings on the Hill. We had a formal dinner out Wednesday evening at "Les Halles Brasserie", a wonderful French restaurant in downtown D.C. This time was used for good food and good conversation between CESO members. Networking is imperative for our CESO members so we can gain insight on what other members have faced, and also to gain their support and trust. But mostly, we enjoyed each other's company, as well as the great food.

On Thursday, May 1st, the groups met in the morning to review the schedule for visits on the Hill, and Legislative Issues were discussed within each subgroup. We broke into five subgroups of about five people each, where each subgroup planned on meeting with about five different legislative offices on the Hill. The rest of the morning and the afternoon were spent on the Hill in our subgroups talking to legislators about our three main areas of concern: 1) Research, Technology & Education, 2) Infrastructure Improvements, & 3) H1-B & L-1 Visas. Afterwards, we had a wrap-up session where we discussed lessons learned and came up with follow-up actions.

Next CESO Meeting: September 15th & 16th, 2008, in Washington D.C.

Discussion on CESO's Principles/Goals

April 30, 2008

1) **Act as an advocate in Washington, DC for issues affecting engineering, scientific, technical and other professional employees.**

- ◆ Coordinating our issues, and advocating in Washington, DC, should be our TOP PRIORITY.
- ◆ We should try to do this with each of our meetings, not just the Spring meeting (perhaps ½ day of each meeting).
- ◆ Form subcommittees of CESO members ... each subcommittee would follow one issue year round, staying in contact with necessary legislators, and sending periodic updates to remaining CESO delegates. (Subcommittees can report on progress of the issues, and request remaining delegates also contact legislators when necessary.) This would get CESO members more involved, and also increase CESO's name recognition.
- ◆ Ask retirees to help monitor our issues (virtually).
- ◆ Discuss how we choose our top three issues. Include everyone's input.
- ◆ Join forces with other groups (e.g., NASHTU, IEEE, etc.)
- ◆ Put out a brochure on our three top issues, something that is easy to pass out. Limit it to three issues, and have a thread between the issues (coordinated message). Promote them year round. Legislators will recognize our issues and remember what we tell them. CESO members will be more familiar with the issues, too.
- ◆ Be sure to follow up with legislators who are contacted.
- ◆ Track our successes, and trumpet successes to members and others.

2) **Exchange collective bargaining data and other information among the member unions.**

- ◆ Conduct surveys often, as the information helps fellow unions in their negotiations.
- ◆ Consider letting member unions update their own survey information on the website (each local could be responsible, on a "secure" portion of the website).
- ◆ Post a "public" section on the website, and a "private" (secure) section for collective bargaining sharing and advocacy information.
- ◆ If we share our information with employees trying to form a union, it could help them with organizing.
- ◆ The website and survey information should be consistently updated.
- ◆ Make sure there is a "point of contact" identified on the website.
- ◆ Look into additional costs of improving CESO's website.
- ◆ Consider a "sounding board", a common forum to virtually prepare for our meetings.

3) **Recruit additional member unions into CESO.**

- ◆ Utilize AFL/DPE, IFPTE, CWA, Change to Win, NASHTU, etc. to solicit new members. (Publish an advertisement in their publications? Find out if they have a list of professional/engineering unions?)
- ◆ Advertise in professional organizations' newsletters (e.g., IEEE, etc.)
- ◆ In our ads, publicize what we do (advocacy on the Hill, exchanging information, etc.)
- ◆ Get our website working and updated!
- ◆ Push to identify unions in states where there are "key" members of Congress.
- ◆ Contact our State Labor Councils to find out about professional unions.
- ◆ Try to find a source for identifying "independent" engineering unions.
- ◆ Maintain contact with unions that have left CESO (especially when there's a change in leadership).

- ◆ Continue to pay for potential new member unions to send a delegate to one CESO meeting.
- ◆ Encourage current CESO member unions to seek out potential unions they may be aware of, or deal with.
- ◆ Make sure new CESO member unions don't dilute CESO's purpose. (Should we worry that increasing our membership might bring in too many "unique" issues that don't apply to others?)
- ◆ Consider offering an "Associate (at large) Membership" to engineers who aren't in unions.

4) Encourage unionization of professional and technical employees.

- ◆ How can we communicate our message? (through our website? in newsletters?)
- ◆ Advertise our successes and gains.
- ◆ What can happen in the future? (e.g., loss of retiree medical, loss of defined benefit pensions, no guarantees for 401k plans or annuities, offer to pay for "alleged" performance)
- ◆ Even if you don't have collective bargaining (e.g., federal sector), highlight the draws – CESO involvement, fraternity.
- ◆ Prepare some videos about benefits of being in a union, and post them on our website (including why engineers and scientists would want to have a union).

5) Build coalitions with other groups & advocate for common issues.

- ◆ Determine a purpose. Build campaign around a legislative issue (either *short-term* issue like "trade agreement", or *long-term* issue like "education").
- ◆ Continue involvement in Mike Balzano's "Industrial-Based Workforce Coalition" (meets in Washington, DC, several times a year with key legislators or administrative personnel).
- ◆ Identify possible involvement between CESO meetings, using CESO's expertise as a year-round resource.
- ◆ When making contacts, consider possible recruitment of those organizations into CESO, if it's an appropriate fit.
- ◆ When visiting the Hill between CESO meetings, take time to promote CESO's issues (but before using CESO's name on an issue, be sure it has been discussed and supported by the CESO body as a whole).
- ◆ CESO has a limited budget, so involvement by more people is needed to get our message out.



- It was suggested we make discussion of these five issues a permanent part of our CESO meeting agendas.

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Puget Sound Naval Shipyard has been working on improvements command-wide. IFPTE Local 12 has taken an active role in determining needed improvement factors and seeing the improvements through, with permanent roles on several action teams. These teams were created under the Guiding Coalition Strategic Initiative. The four areas of focus for 2008 are 1) Diversity, 2) People, 3) Communications, and 4) Culture of Continuous Improvement. Within these groups, some of the items we have strived for include: retention of our workforce, professional growth for those who seek it, work/life balance, LEAN, improving communications command-wide, free after-hours courses on leadership & organizational development, and many, many more.

IFPTE Local 12 continues to maintain excellent working relationships with the Shipyard's management team. This is an important aspect of what we as a union strive for. In keeping good relationships, we have created a positive working environment with can-do attitudes on both sides. We have teamed with management to give our labor reps mentoring by the Shipyard's top leaders, and in doing this, they can better learn our perspective and we theirs. This creates a more cohesive, positively structured environment encompassing our management/labor relations. IFPTE Local 12 recently went through contract negotiations with the Shipyard. Negotiations were limited to a handful of issues, but our labor team working side-by-side with management was able to reach an agreement on all accounts in just three hours. Again, this is due to a trusting relationship on both sides.

IFPTE remains a standing voice on the PSNBA (Puget Sound Naval Bases Association) team. We led the Shipyard in the command drive last year and will again in 2008, as it brings a great deal of attention to the importance of keeping jobs abundant at the Shipyard and provides much needed support to keep the PSNBA team active. Doing the drive brings a great deal of respect and awareness to our union and integrates non-members with members from both unions (IFPTE & BMTC (Bremerton Metal Trades Council)) on a unified area of focus we all care about - without jobs, none of us would be here!

We continue to have a union rep working full time on the VPP (Voluntary Protection Program) team, improving safety and awareness shipyard-wide. The union and shipyard management have committed to provide the employees the best health and safety program possible, and the Shipyard continues in its recognition as an OSHA VPP Star Site.

Again for the year 2008, we have a training budget for our union reps of \$10,000. Some areas of focus for training this year have been in leadership, team building skills, labor relations, negotiations, arbitration, and many more.

We as a union continue to fight the roll out of NSPS (National Security Personnel System) for bargaining unit employees. All PSNS & IMF General Schedule (GS) Non-Bargaining Unit Employees will be working to NSPS as soon as April 2008.