

# WEEK IN ACTION!

**Weekly News From Your Union ~ May 5, 2014 – May 9, 2014**

## Happy Public Service Recognition Week VSEA!

VSEA President Shelley Martin and the entire VSEA Board of Trustees are wishing every state and public employee a happy Public Service Recognition Week and a huge thank you for your service to the people of Vermont.

“While it is important for America to designate a week each year to officially celebrate the outstanding work that public service workers perform, VSEA appreciates your contribution 365 days a year,” said Martin. “VSEA is proud to represent you, and we take great pride in providing all the support and assistance we can. This includes bargaining help, complaint and grievance assistance, steward support, legal help, legislative lobbying, skills training and assistance with many other work-related issues. All too often, the essential services provided by America’s public sector workers are overlooked and undervalued. It is unfortunate that many average citizens do not think about their daily use of public services and the people that provide them. One of VSEA’s top priorities will continue to be highlighting the essential services you provide. On behalf of VSEA and the more than 5,500 public service employees we represent, we thank you for your commitment and service to the citizens of our great state.

Martin also attended the State’s annual Public Service Recognition Awards Ceremony on May 8, which was hosted by DHR Commissioner Kate Duffy and Secretary of the Administration Jeb Spaulding. Here’s a list of some of the VSEA members who were honored and a short excerpt from the program write-up about the honoree(s):

### Individual

Laurie Bean

AOT Senior Systems Developer

“Tasked with the in-house development of the AOT’s most challenging and innovative information technology projects, [Laurie Bean] is greatly appreciated and respected by her co-workers and customers. She is a true professional and plays a critical role in delivering the AOT’s mission.”

Steve Bushman

ANR Environmental Engineer

“Steve Bushman has worked in the Dam Safety Program for the past 11+ years, and for

several of those years was the lone engineer working in the program responsible for inspecting a universe of 450 dams, while responsible for monitoring three flood control dams and performing a number of other related duties.”

Amber Charbonneau

Corrections Service Specialist

“As a Probation Officer supervising a Risk Management caseload of primarily women, Amber Charbonneau demonstrates superior quality, exemplifying leadership in all aspects of her job performance. Amber is well respected and regularly receives accolades from the Parole Board, Courts, and the other agencies referencing her professionalism, teamwork, positive attitude and high quality of work. Amber is a true role model for other Probation Officers.

Ken Cox

ANR Fish & Wildlife Scientist

“Ken Cox has been the State’s primary witness and scientist in the long-standing Vermont Yankee thermal discharge permitting process. Over the years, Ken has put in hundreds of hours developing written documents to address the claims of opposing legal/biological consultants. Ken has committed a significant amount of his career to this difficult project with professionalism, commitment and scientific expertise.”

Beth Demers

ACCD Workforce Training Program Director

“Beth has worked tirelessly to make the Vermont Training Program a more effective, valuable and accountable program. Her professionalism, openness, and collaborative work style have been noted both within the Department of Economic Development and by our clients.”

Michelle Hunt

Activities Aide

“Michelle Hunt’s care and thoughtfulness towards our veterans is limitless. She is a bundle of energy, always ensuring they are cared for and loved. Michelle is a wonderful and well deserving of this auspicious award.”

Laurel Omland

DMH Children’s Mental Health Operations Chief

“Laurel is a sensitive, responsive and competent professional leader. Her poise, stability and creativity are hallmarks of her style. She is always committed to providing the best services to Vermont’s children and families.”

Nick Wark

AOT Civil Engineer

"Since Tropical Storm Irene, Nick has been the agency 'go to' person who expertly fields questions raised by various sources about the process for sizing structures and the importance of sizing appropriately. There are many examples of how Nick proves to be a valuable public employee, and we are lucky to have him at VTrans."

Mandy White

AOT Technician

"Mandy does an outstanding job building positive relationships with the law enforcement community as well as providing statewide law enforcement with user training, support and data mining assistance. Mandy continues to demonstrate her interest and dedication to the safety of the traveling public in Vermont."

Nicole York

Fire Prevention Regional Assistant

"Nicole York has done a fabulous job for the division of Fire Safety. She keeps several hundred licenses current while assisting four Boards assigned to the Division. She is dedicated state employee and motivated to get the job done."

#### Teams/VSEA Team Members

ANR VTHR Implementation Team -- Adrienne Jones, Julia Stone

DAIL Brandon Training School 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Team – Jeff Coy, Jennie Masterson

AOT Central Garage Regional Supervisors Team – Darby Merrihew, Dennis Reid

DOH Chlorpyrifos Response Team – Andy Chevrefils, Sue Hommel, Tara Reil, Melissa Richards

Civil Engineer Snow Removal Team – Kevin Crowley, Dave Solomon, Gill Daudelin, Marc Ziegler

Secretary of State's Corporations Division Team – Kim Choquette, Maureen Murphy, Koren Steventon

DPS Energy Generation Siting Policy Commission Team – Billy Coster, Anne Margolis

DFM Expense Team – Tina Rich, Karen Symonds

Libraries' Interlibrary Loan Team – Sara Blow, Gerrie Denison, Greg McCandless, Linda Willis-Pendo

DMV Oversize Load Movement Team – Bobbi Jo Clark, Donna Earle, William "Jake" Elovirta, Matthew Nesto, Kim Plante, Ruth Wakefield

DOL Program Integrity Unit – Deb Bolio, AnnMarie Bolton, Michele Brown, Marion Fignar, Lee Gable, Cheryl Grandfield, Danielle Laquerre  
Governor’s Race To The Top Early Learning Challenge Grant Writing Team – Ben Allen, Jan Walker  
DVHA Vermont Chronic Care Initiative Team – Heather Bollman, Christopher Chadwick, AnnMarie Miles, Kathy Shuster, Dawn Weening, Angie White  
AOT VTrans Hearings Unit – Richard Boulanger

## Katelyn Chase Elected Board Of Trustees’ Clerk

VSEA’s Elections, Rules and Nominating Committee was at headquarters on May 6 to count the ballots cast in a recent election to become Clerk for the union’s Board of Trustees. The Committee is pleased to announce that Katelyn Chase has been elected. Chase is a DCF Benefits Program Specialist working in Morrisville.

Congratulations Katelyn!

## VSEA ERN Chair Solicits Candidates For Seats On The Board Of Trustees

**VSEA Elections, Rules and Nominating Committee Chair Mary Poulos sent the following message to members on May 7:**

As set forth in VSEA Bylaws, the following seats on the VSEA Board of Trustees are up for petition and election:

Supervisory Trustee  
Corrections Trustee  
State College Trustee\*  
DG/VSHA Trustee  
District 4 Trustee (Franklin/Grand Isle, Chittenden, Addison)

\* The Vermont State Colleges use a different nomination process, as outlined in VSC Bylaw Six.

If you are interested in placing your name into nomination to run for election for a seat on the VSEA Board of Trustees, please complete the [attached petition](#) and return it to VSEA headquarters by the deadline date of 4:00 p.m., May 30, 2014. To be eligible for candidacy for this position, you must be an active member of VSEA. In order for your petition to be accepted, it must have the signatures of at least 25 VSEA members.

Please note that “agency-fee payers” are not full-fledged members and their signatures are not valid for inclusion on your petition. Therefore it is suggested that you obtain more than 25 signatures.

#### Role of a Trustee:

The VSEA Board of Trustees manages the internal affairs of the union and ensures that the policies of VSEA are followed. It reviews and approves the union’s budget for submission to the membership, and it reviews committee reports and recommends action by the Council and members. The Board also sets policy for VSEA.

The Board meets monthly and Trustees are expected to attend all the meetings as well as all quarterly Council meetings and the VSEA Annual Meeting. Release time from work is authorized under the unit collective bargaining contract. Each Trustee is also assigned to at least one VSEA Chapter to attend meetings and provide any necessary assistance.

If you have questions regarding your petition to fill a VSEA Trustee seat, please email [Mary Poulos](#). The deadline to submit petition to fill the seat of VSEA Trustee is 4:00 p.m., Friday May 30, 2014.

Send your [petition](#) to:

VSEA  
ERN Committee  
155 State Street  
Montpelier, VT. 05602

### **VSEA Files ULP Contesting Corrections Superintendent’s Actions**

**VSEA issued the following press release on May 8:**

This morning, the Vermont State Employees’ Association (VSEA) will file an unfair labor practice charge with the Vermont Labor Relations Board (VLRB), asserting that Southern State Correctional Facility (SSCF) Superintendent Mark Potanas “interfered with, restrained and /or coerced employees in the exercise of their rights guaranteed by 3 V.S.A. §903(a).”

In response to employees’ complaints about working conditions at SSCF, VSEA issued

a survey in February 2014 designed to identify the main problems and issues, and evaluate employee morale. However, when several SSCF employees showed up to an April 29 Labor/Management meeting to discuss the survey findings with Potanas, he proceeded to criticize VSEA's survey and openly suggested that the union should have included questions about how members thought VSEA was doing and if they were being well served by their union.

"VSEA labor team members at Southern State were scheduled to meet with Mr. Potanas to discuss the findings of the union's survey with him, but before that conversation could even begin, Mr. Potanas began criticizing the survey and shaming the union," explained VSEA Associate General Counsel Rebecca McBroom. "In addition to his questions being highly inappropriate, Mr. Potanas openly admitted to our labor team members that he had questioned employees about whether or not they had completed the VSEA survey. We believe the VLRB will find a violation of these state employees' statutory rights to engage in protected, concerted activity."

McBroom added that VSEA members completing a union- issued survey constitutes "protected union activity," and that Potanas' actions violated 3 V.S.A. §961(1).

## **VSEA Schedules Informational Meeting With Department Of Agriculture Employees**

VSEA is hosting an informational lunchtime meeting on Friday, May 16, for union members working at the Department of Agriculture. The meeting, which begins at 12:00 p.m. and ends at 1:00 p.m., is being held in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room at 116 State St. in Montpelier. Pizza and drinks will be provided. Please attend and bring your co-workers. If you have any questions, please contact VSEA Organizer Josh Massey by email ([jmassey@vsea.org](mailto:jmassey@vsea.org)) or by phone at 223-5247.

Topics of discussion for this meeting include:

- What issues would you like to see your Union take on?
- How are decisions made in the Union?
- How do you stay in the loop on key events, issues and updates within your Union?
- What happens in the VSEA building in Montpelier? How does the work happening there help me? and
- What are some different approaches to resolve workplace issues and improve your wages, benefits, and retirement security?

*Your union is an organization made up of you, the people who work for the State. Together, you have more power to make improvements on the job and have the power to maintain the things that are important to you. We will always be stronger standing together as a group than we can ever possibly be standing alone as an individual.*

## **VSEA Whistleblower Is Featured Panelist At May 8 CCTA Solidarity Celebration**

VSEA whistleblower John Howe was a featured panelist at a May 8 solidarity event held in Burlington to celebrate the CCTA bus drivers' recent contract victory. Panel members, which included CCTA drivers, Howe and members of other Vermont unions, discussed the lessons learned from the drivers' well-publicized contract fight and how these lessons can be applied to other current workplace struggles across Vermont. Howe received a standing ovation when he spoke to the crowd about his fight to end retaliation against state employees who speak out against waste, fraud and corruption. He cited the CCTA drivers' struggle and victory as a motivating reason for his decision to take a stand now to prevent retaliation against state and public employees and really all working Vermonters. A large group of VSEA supporters were in the crowd to cheer Howe on and show the union's solidarity with the CCTA drivers and all of Vermont labor.

## **VSEA Needs To Know If Your Mailing Address Is Different Than Your Home Address**

Many VSEA members have a mailing address that is different from their home address. They may keep a P.O. Box at the post office, or they may have a mailbox with an address different from their actual house address. If this is the case with you, please email the Union at [nstein@vsea.org](mailto:nstein@vsea.org) and let us know! Our reason is that the address information for our members that we receive from the State is unreliable. The State cannot report to us both a "Mailing Address" and a "Home Address." We only occasionally send paper U.S. mail, but, when we do, it's important, and includes: Ballots for Union elections, insurance information, and legally-required warnings of Union meetings.

If your mailing address is different from your home address, we need you to tell us! Email [nstein@vsea.org](mailto:nstein@vsea.org). Thanks!

## **Upcoming Meetings/Events/Holidays:**

**May 14**

Steward Training: Your Bargaining Unit's Contract (NMU)

Room 1A

108 Cherry St.

Burlington

9:00 a.m.

## **May 16**

Steward Training: Solidarity, Power and State Policies

Shelburne Room

32 Cherry St.

Burlington

9:00 a.m.

## **May 16**

Child & Elder Care Committee Meeting

VSEA HQ

Montpelier

9:30 a.m.