



WEEK IN ACTION!

Weekly News From Your Union ~ January 5, 2014 – January 9, 2015

2015 Legislative Session Launches

House Speaker Shap Smith banged the gavel on January 7, officially opening the 2015 Vermont legislative session. Earlier this week, VSEA emailed a legislative preview issue of the *VOICE* to all members and retirees. It details the issues rank-and-file members determined to be priorities for the union's legislative agenda in 2015. If you don't remember seeing the email with the preview, please [click here](#) to read it now.

As expected, the first week back was primarily reserved for the election of the Governor and the delivering of his inaugural address. In the crowd to hear the speech were VSEA President Shelley Martin and First Vice President Michelle Salvador. Both were pleased to hear the Governor say this near the end of his address: "We cannot simply cut our way out of out of our fiscal challenge year after year...taking away services that are important to so many Vermonters."

"I was pleasantly surprised to hear the Governor echo a line from an ad VSEA is currently running on *VT Digger*," said Martin. "Our ads say 'we can't cut our way out again' and it appears the Governor agrees. Now it's a question of exactly how do we reduce Vermont's deficit without harming state services or cutting much-needed jobs. VSEA members have some ideas about that and we'll be sharing them soon with State officials, lawmakers and Vermonters."

Happy Law Enforcement Appreciation Day!

VSEA salutes all of our members working in law enforcement on Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, which is today.

VSEA is proud to represent hundreds of Vermonters working in law enforcement, including Game Wardens, State Police Lieutenants and Dispatchers, Parole and Probation officers, Liquor Control officers, DMV officers, Corrections employees, employees in the State Attorney's offices and others.

"VSEA greatly appreciates the important service our members working in law enforcement provide to Vermonters every day," said VSEA President Shelley Martin.

Register Today To Attend VSEA's 2015 State House Day

An online form has been created for VSEA members to use to register to attend the union's 2015 State House Day, which is Tuesday, February 17.

At State House Day (formerly "Lobby Day"), VSEA members are afforded an opportunity to talk with legislators about the services you provide and the issues and challenges you and your colleagues face.

Register today and help make this VSEA's most successful State House Day ever. With Vermont facing a huge budget deficit, it's more important than ever to demonstrate VSEA members'

collective power at the State House and remind lawmakers that we're not only state employees who provide services, we're also Vermont voters, and we care about the adverse impact service and personnel cuts have had—and will have—on the communities where we live.

New VSEA Member Representatives Needed For Non-Management Unit Sick Leave Bank Committee!

VSEA's Non-Management Unit (NMU) is actively recruiting members interested in serving on the Unit's Sick Leave Bank Committee.

The Sick Leave Bank, which awards additional sick leave to members who have serious and often life-threatening health issues, is dependent on state employees donating annual leave, personal leave or compensatory time to it.

This NMU committee operates in a labor/management setting, meaning VSEA and DHR representatives meet jointly. It convenes monthly to review and act on applications from members. It is crucial that VSEA have adequate representation on this committee.

If you are interested in serving on this committee, please send a letter of interest to Bob Stone, NMU Chair, VSEA, 155 State Street, Montpelier, Vt. 05602, or send an email to Bob at rstone@vsea.org.

Please include information about yourself (i.e. where you work, how long you've worked for the State, how long you've been a VSEA member) and your reasons for wanting to be on the committee. Members of the NMU Executive Committee will review letters of interest and appoint members to the committee.

VSEA President Begins Announcing Committee Appointments

VSEA President Shelley Martin is thanking all the VSEA members who recently submitted letters of interest to sit on a standing VSEA committee. Shelley reports that she is actively working to reappoint VSEA committee members, and she began sending emails this week to VSEA members selected to serve on various union committees, such as Benefits Advisory, Membership Recruitment, Bylaws, Special Events, Budget, etc,

“If you have been selected to serve on a VSEA committee, you should have received an email from me—or will soon—welcoming you to the committee,” explained Martin. “If you didn't reply to my initial committee solicitation but are still interested in serving on a committee, please send an email to vsea@vsea.org identifying the committees that interest you. Thank you again to every VSEA member who has volunteered already to serve on a committee. I really appreciate your activism.”

State Employee Wellness Program Kicks Off 2015 Incentive Campaign

WIA is pleased to share this information about the 2015 LiveWell Vermont State Employees' Wellness Program. The program's 2015 incentive campaign “One Life, Live it Well,” encourages employees to complete the following wellness initiatives:

- Filling out a 2015 online personal health assessment, via the “LiveWell Vermont” portal: \$50/50 points;
- Completing one of four wellness challenges,” which are administered by “LiveWell Vermont” staff during the 2015 incentive year: \$25/25 points;
- Finishing one workshop, via the portal, by November 1, 2015: \$25/25 points; and as a bonus
- Having an annual physical exam conducted between November 1, 2014, and November 1, 2015: \$50/50 points.

Completing these wellness initiatives qualifies active, permanent state employees covered under Blue Cross/Blue Shield for cash incentives up to \$150. Non-plan employees can earn points and qualify for wellness drawings, which are held on a quarterly basis and during challenges.

2015 Challenge Number One – New Year, New You!

Time period: January 19, 2015 – March 1, 2015

Join this six-week weight loss challenge to kick-start your 2015 wellness plan! Create a team or participate solo.

Here’s the challenge:

Reduce your starting weight by 1% over the course of the challenge’s six weeks;

In addition, complete weekly wellness tasks to be eligible for weekly drawings and receive motivational emails each week from the LiveWell Vermont Wellness staff!

To register to participate in the first challenge, please visit the [LiveWell Vermont entry portal](#) between Monday, January 5, and Monday, January 19, 2015. You will need to log in into the portal to register. First-time user? Click on “Click Here to Sign Up” to create your new user account.

VSEA Members Wanted For Judicial Board!

VSEA President Shelley Martin asked *WIA* to include a solicitation to members who might be interested in serving on the union’s Judicial Board. Martin notes that, historically, members who serve on this Board are not activists, stewards, officials or Council or Board of Trustees’ members.

“In this rare case, the less involvement you have with VSEA, the better suited you are to serve in this role,” explains Martin. “We need members who can be objective.”

VSEA’s Judicial Board is charged with ensuring elected and appointed union officials’ compliance with Unit and Master Articles, Bylaws and adopted policies. The Judicial Board is also charged with ensuring that all Unit, Chapter, and VSEA elected and appointed officials and members shall act in a manner consistent with the purposes and policies of the VSEA, and with the goals and objectives of the union and its Units and Chapters, and not act in a way that is

detrimental to the purposes of the VSEA as specified in Article 2 of these Articles of Association.

The Judicial Board consists of VSEA members, who are appointed by the VSEA President. If you would interested in submitting your name for consideration, please send your letter of interest to VSEA President Shelley Martin no later than Friday, January 30, 2015. The mailing address is 155 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05602.

Nearly 500 State Employees Already Enjoying Capital Commuters' Discount

Administrators of the State's "Capital Commuters" program asked *WIA* to reach out again to our central Vermont members and urge more state employees to bring 2015 in right by signing up to use the program. Already, nearly 500 employees are enrolled in the savings program, designed to encourage ride sharing and increase the use of public transportation.

To learn more about the Capital Commuters program and its incentives and rewards, please [click here](#) to view the group's January newsletter, or [click here](#) to view and print a bulletin board or pass-out flyer that explains the program.

Upcoming Meetings/Events/Holidays:

January 13

VSCSF Executive Board Meeting
VSEA HQ
Montpelier
9:30 a.m.

January 15

Board of Trustees' Meeting
VSEA HQ
Montpelier
9:30 a.m.