



WEEK IN ACTION!

Weekly News From Your Union ~ April 10 – April 14, 2017

Your union's weekly newsletter, *Week In Action*, is emailed every Friday afternoon. *Week In Action* is the best way to stay up to date with weekly VSEA news!

➤ Subscribe to *Week In Action* Online: www.vsea.org/wia

State's Top Official Visits VSEA Board

VSEA's Board of Trustees invited Vermont's newly elected Governor Phil Scott to stop by its monthly meeting this week in Montpelier for an informal meet-and-greet, as well as to talk about his vision for state government moving forward and discuss areas where he and VSEA might be able to work together to improve public services for all Vermonters. Joining Scott at the meeting were the two members of his cabinet who are likely to have the most interaction with VSEA leaders and members during his tenure, Secretary of the Administration Suzanne Young and newly appointed Department of Human Resources Commissioner Beth Fastiggi.

Some of the topics the Governor was asked about include: the possible privatization of Vermont guardrail repair; assaults on VSEA DOC, DCF, DMH and VVH members; frontline worker safety and security enhancements; what lies ahead for health care; possibility of "spending a day working as a state employee;" increased State Colleges' funding and DOC policy and protocols.

As part of the meeting, several Board members presented the Governor with a giant petition signed by more than 1,200 VSEA members and supporters. The petition declares VSEA members' readiness to work cooperatively with the Governor to address the many challenges confronting Vermont's public services, and, in return, it asks him to:

- Invest in public services, not in private contractors;
- Protect state employees' benefits, especially our defined benefit pension plan, because this benefit plays a large part in attracting and retaining new talent to state government;
- Enhance employees' safety and security while at work; and
- Respect state employees' right to collectively bargain.

Scott thanked the Board for the petition and told them that he is hopeful he can work with VSEA to confront some of Vermont's largest challenges. Scott then reminded Board members that he has been a longtime advocate of going straight to frontline workers to find solutions to problems, sharing a story about having to hunt down a BGS employee to unlock his office door on his first day as Governor.

Happy 150th Anniversary Vermont Technical College!

VSEA is sending happy anniversary wishes to the faculty and staff--both present and past--at the Vermont Technical College in Randolph Center. VTC is celebrating its 150-year anniversary in 2017. Yesterday, the General Assembly marked the occasion with a special proclamation to make April 13 "VTC Day" in Vermont.

VSEA is proud to represent many VTC workers.

VSEA AOT Members Sending Message To Stop Privatization Of Guardrail Work

VSEA AOT members are being urged to contact the State's top official with messages to stop the privatization of Vermont guardrail work. Workers learned recently that a "request for proposals" had been issued, and they are banding together now to voice their opposition.

"State AOT employees have done the bulk of this work for years, and we have done it well when asked to by management—and we want to continue doing it," the AOT workers' message reads, in part. "This is our pledge to you: tell us your timeline, and we'll show you that we're up for the challenge."

VSEA members are urged to support the AOT members' effort to prevent this privatization from happening.

New VSEA-Supported Surgical Center Runs Into Opposition

Recognizing that something has to be done to try to lower health care costs for average working Vermonters, VSEA's Board of Trustees voted a while back to endorse a group of local Vermont investors' plan to build a 12,800-square-foot surgical center in Colchester. The Board's belief was that competition is always a good thing and a new surgical center could possibly help drive down costs some, primarily because it might force UVM's medical network and others to reevaluate their pricing and quality of service.

"If Vermonters, including state employees, can pay less for a procedure at this surgical center than at UVM or another hospital, then what's wrong with that?" VSEA President Dave Bellini explained to *WIA*.

[*VT Digger* reports today](#) that the investors' plan is meeting some tough resistance from the Vermont Association of Hospitals and others. They argue the new surgical center "could be detrimental to the health care system as Vermonters know it." The issue is currently before the Green Mountain Care Board (GMCB).

"The GMCB has a concrete opportunity to lower the cost of care," Bellini writes in a comment her post to the *Digger* story. "If this surgical center is denied then I question the need for a GMCB. Listen to consumers instead of hospital executives." Bellini adds that he was angered that meeting organizers allowed for just a few minutes of public comment.

Digger notes that the GMCB is taking public comment on the surgical center [through its website](#) and will take additional public comment at its board meeting April 19.

According to Bellini, the surgical center concept is also endorsed by the NEA and the AARP.

Tuesday Is The Deadline To Submit Bylaw Changes

The deadline to submit proposals for changes to VSEA's Master Bylaws is Tuesday, April 18, 2017. Proposals must be mailed to: Cassandra Edson, Bylaws Committee Chair, c/o VSEA Headquarters, P.O. Box 518, Montpelier, VT 05602.

Proposals should reference the number, section, sub-section, etc. of the bylaw you would like to change. You should also include the language you want to add, delete or substitute. Also include the reason(s) you are making this proposal. Example: "Bylaw 0 A (1) (b) Change: Monday to Sunday. Reason: Makes it easier to work with the calendar."

Please be sure the changes you are recommending include all Articles and/or Bylaws that may be affected by the proposed change.

If you have questions, please contact Cassandra by email at cassandraedson@hotmail.com.

Now Is Time To Enroll In VSEA's Popular Delta Dental Supplemental Plan Benefit

Letters should have arrived by now in the mailboxes of VSEA members, announcing the open enrollment period to participate in your union's very popular Delta Dental Supplemental Plan. The enrollment period is also when members already in the program can amend their number of dependents also using the program, if this number has changed in the past year.

All enrollment forms are due back to VSEA by Friday, May 12, 2017.

[VSEA members can also find information and an enrollment form on VSEA.org](#)

*Note: If you are already taking advantage of this benefit, and you have no changes this year to your coverage, **you do not need to send back a new form**, as you will be automatically renewed.*

Brattleboro Chapter President Reminds Members Of Meeting Date Change

VSEA Brattleboro Chapter President Robin Rieske sent an email to members this week to remind them that the Chapter meeting originally scheduled for April 14 was rescheduled to Wednesday, April 19. The meeting begins at 4:45 p.m. at the PanAsian Restaurant on Putney Road.

Robin is asking members who are attending to please RSVP to her so she knows how much food to order. You can email her at robin.rieske@vermont.gov.

Central Vermont Chapter Members Participating In Next Weekend's March For Science In D.C. & The 4/29 Climate March In Montpelier. Inviting All VSEA Members To Join Them!

Activists belonging to VSEA's Central Vermont Chapter are casting a net to find other Chapter and VSEA members who would like to participate with them in two upcoming climate-change events, including:

- Earth Day "March for Science" – Saturday April 22 – Washington D.C.; and
- People's Climate March – Saturday, April 29 – Montpelier, Vt.

If you would be interested in marching with VSEA members at either of these events, please contact VSEA Central Vermont Chapter member Ned Swanberg for more information. You can email Ned at ned.swanberg@gmail.com. Members of the Chapter will be carrying the Chapter's banner at each event.

2017 Corporate Cup Seeks Volunteers

The 2017 Corporate Cup 5K Race is being held Thursday, May 11, at the State House in Montpelier, beginning at 6 p.m. Once again, race planners are casting a net for volunteers, and VSEA is urging members and retirees who are able to sign up to help—much as you have in years past!

Volunteer opportunities include registering races, distributing t-shirts, manning the food tents and mid-point water stop, helping at the start and finish lines, assisting the timing company with posting race results and two individuals to help on the cone truck.

To volunteer, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Cindy Hier by email at chier@zclpc.com. Please let Cindy know your task preference and your anticipated arrival time.

Remember: volunteers can walk or run, too. Invite friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers to volunteer with you. Receive a free t-shirt!

[Event Facebook Page](#)

VSEA Schedules 2017 "Steward Summit" Series

In an effort to better educate frontline worksite Stewards about their role in VSEA, as well as provide them with enhancements to their existing skill set, VSEA's Field Department is hosting a series of "Steward Summits" across Vermont throughout 2017.

Stewards will also learn the latest developments relating to contract enforcement and receive an overview of the budget, safety and health and other challenges that lie ahead for state employees. Stewards who attend will be asked to immediately help out by taking some of what they learn back to the

worksite to educate their colleagues.

Four, six-hour trainings have been scheduled, and every current VSEA Steward is required to attend one session.

The Steward Summits (all 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.) are:

May 19 – Best Western, 45 Blush Hill Road, Waterbury

August 18 – Best Western, 45 Blush Hill Road, Waterbury

October 20 – Hotel Coolidge, 39 South Main St., White River Junction

November 3 – Holiday Inn, 476 Holiday Drive, Rutland

[Click Here To Register For Steward Summit](#)

VSEA Bargaining Team Members: Mark Your Calendars!

VSEA Labor Relations Director Gary Hoadley announced this week that he will be conducting an all-bargaining-team-member “negotiations” training on Wednesday, May 3, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Best Western Hotel, located at 45 Blush Hill Road in Waterbury. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. and lunch is being provided.

To RSVP for this important training, please contact Ayla Hudson at VSEA, by email (ahudson@vsea.org) or by phone at 802-223-5247. The cutoff date to register is Thursday, April 20.

Upcoming Vermont Bucks Special "State Employee" Night!

25% Ticket-Price Discount For April 22 Game!

The Vermont Bucks were so impressed with the great response from VSEA members to the team's recent 50% off VIP Box-Level ticket price offer, that the Bucks are now offering a 25% ticket-price discount* to any VSEA member who attends the April 22 home game.

To receive the 25% discount, VSEA members must show their green "VSEA Membership Card" and give the promo code word: **"ORANGE."**

If you are in need of a green VSEA membership card, [please request one online here!](#) However, please note that VSEA will be unable to provide

If you have questions about the discount, please contact Sue DeVoid at VSEA by email (sdevoid@vsea.org) or phone 802-223-5247.

***The 25% discount does not apply to general admission tickets.**

Non-Management Unit Sick Leave Bank Teetering On Bankruptcy! VSEA Members Urged To Contribute

Donations Being Accepted April 1 To June 30

VSEA member Dawn Carrillo staffs the Non-Management Unit Sick Leave Bank, and she is again asking *WIA* to sound the alarm that the bank is nearly depleted of hours. She is also announcing that NMU members can donate a few hours to your

Unit's sick leave bank from **April 1 to June 30, 2017.**

"Just donating an hour of your time can mean the world to a fellow employee," reads a new flyer DHR is circulating. It also informs state employees that they can **donate any amount of annual- or personal-leave time** to the NMU Sick Leave Bank. "Know that you are performing a wonderful service by helping your friends and fellow employees, who, along with their families, are struggling due to serious health issues," the flyer concludes.

[VSEA members interested in donating some much-needed time to the NMU, Corrections and Supervisory Sick Leave Banks can find a donation form here.](#)

"I want to thank every member for considering a donation to your Unit sick leave bank," says VSEA President Dave Bellini. "Even if you only donate one hour to the bank, these one-hour donations add up. It's so worthwhile because your donation is going to help a fellow state employee who is battling a serious illness."

are going in the mail soon to VSEA members, announcing the open enrollment period to participate in your union's very popular Delta Dental Supplemental Plan. The enrollment period is also when members already in the program can amend their number of dependents also using the program, if this number has changed in the past year.

Once received in your mailbox, all enrollment forms will be due back to VSEA by Friday, May 12, 2017.

*Note: If you are already taking advantage of this benefit, and you have no changes this year to your coverage, **you do not need to send back a new form**, as you will be automatically renewed.*

Reminder: VSEA Membership Recruitment Committee Sponsoring 2017 Recruitment Drive. Prizes Being Awarded!

Last fall, VSEA's Membership Recruitment Committee launched a "Membership Engagement and Recruitment Initiative" to grow the union's ranks. The Committee asked members to talk with current agency-fee payers about the benefits of full-fledged membership and why the member should make the switch. If the member decides to upgrade their membership, the recruiting member will have the satisfaction of knowing they helped their union become stronger, but, in addition, the Membership Recruitment Committee will be awarding different levels of prizes to members, based on the number of new VSEA members recruited.

Here are the guidelines to participate and be eligible for a prize:

- Whether submitting your recruited member(s) name(s) on a physical recruitment card or online, **you must include your name as the recruiter;**
- Every member who recruits a new member will have his or her name entered into a drawing for the Grand Prize. The winner's name will be drawn at

VSEA's Annual Meeting in September 2017, and the winner must be present to claim the prize;

- Team entries are being accepted. Please register with Membership Recruitment Committee Chair Katelyn Chase by emailing her at kchase@vsea.org.
- Members who recruit a new member, who then agrees to join your union's political awareness committee (VTPAC) will receive an additional chance to win the Grand Prize, and
- The cut-off date for this competition is **August 30, 2017**.

Here are the different prize levels:

75 prizes awarded - \$10 gift card and a VSEA water bottle

40 prizes awarded - \$25 gift card and a VSEA hat

15 prizes awarded - \$50 gift card and a VSEA tote bag

8 prizes awarded - \$100 and a VSEA vest

1 Grand Prize - \$1200

Note: WIA is periodically reminding members about this effort until its culmination in August 2017.

Bolton Valley Already Offering VSEA Members Discounted 2017-2018 Passes

Bolton Valley (BV) Ski Resort has been a VSEA Advantage Program participant for years, offering state employees discounted season passes. It's a popular item, and while winter 2016 is not even over yet, BV is already offering VSEA members discounted 2017-2018 ski passes.

Important! To purchase an online, discounted BV 2017-2018 pass, you must first receive a special promotional code directly from the VSEA Advantage Program. To get a promo code, contact VSEA's Susan DeVoid by email (sdevoid@vsea.org) or by phone at 802-223-5247. Susan is only available during normal VSEA operating hours.

After receiving your VSEA online promotional code, simply log on to www.boltonvalley.com/industry to purchase your pass(es).

Enjoy the slopes—and the discount!

VSEA Schedules 2017 "Day At Fenway" Event For August 27

Last year, VSEA scheduled its first-ever "VSEA Day at Fenway" event, and it was a huge success. This year, VSEA will again be sponsoring a trip to Fenway, this time to see the Red Sox battle the Baltimore Orioles in a 1:05 p.m. start on Sunday, August 27. The estimated cost is \$80 per person, which includes a bus ride to and from the park, as well as a ticket to the game.

If you and your family would be interested in joining your union and fellow members at Fenway on August 27, 2017, you should contact VSEA Union Representative Bob South. You can reach Bob by email at bsouth@vsea.org or by phone at 223-5247.

VSEA Organizer's Upcoming Worksite Meetings

VSEA Organizer Tim Lench is personally conducting informational meetings in set workplaces on set days in four locations. He says the purpose of the meetings is to provide members with an opportunity to "join with their colleagues and VSEA staff for updates and discussion on the issues and challenges facing state employees and the impact on your working conditions and the services they provide." He adds that members are welcome to "come share their ideas and hear from co-workers on how to build a stronger union and improve public services."

Snacks and refreshments are provided.

St Johnsbury

AHS Conference Room
DOH
107 Eastern Ave.

May 9

Brattleboro

Room 148
State Office Building
232 Main Street

May 12

June 9

White River Junction

Room 170
State Office Building
118 Prospect Street

April 18 – Room 120

May 16

June 20

Springfield,

First Floor Conference Room
State Office Building
100 Mineral Street

April 19

May 17

June 21

VSEA Spring 2017 Training Schedule

The spring 2017 training schedule is winding down, but one session remains.

If you are interested in registering to attend this training, you can do so by [clicking here](#). Please direct your training questions to Tim at tlenoch@vsea.org.

The training begins at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 4:00 p.m.

Location may change based on worksite location of registered participants. If this happens, registered participants will be notified at least a week ahead of the training. Mileage and lunch may be reimbursed or provided.

NEW STEWARD TRAININGS

Steward 2: Protecting the Contract and Building the Union

VTrans Training Center, 1716 US Rte. 302, Berlin

Thursday, May 16

[Click here](#) to register for a training(s)!

Stormy Weather On The Horizon For America's Unions

[The Washington Post published a story this morning](#) about a decision by top officials of the Service Employees' International Union (SEIU) to cut the union's operating budget by 30 percent in anticipation of a possible Supreme Court ruling and deep federal cuts that will impact SEIU members and thousands more union nationwide. In fact, the cuts being proposed are so draconian that even non-union workers probably won't be spared.

"These particular budget cuts are our way of enacting financial efficiencies to deal with the realities posed by extremist, right-wing labor policy in all branches of the federal government," SEIU spokesperson Sahar Wali told the *Post* in an email, "and still implement our plan to win for working people."

Subscribe To VSEA Today!

VSEA's Communications Department is happy to disseminate any and all communications the leadership, Chapters, Units, and others request, however, the lists the Department currently pull from are provided to the union by the State of Vermont. VSEA's Communications Department has found the lists to be dated, incomplete and sometimes lacking key information that was entered by a VSEA staff person but later overwritten or deleted during a State data dump.

To help VSEA more effectively reach active members—and really all those members who want to know what's going on in their union—VSEA will be working hard in the coming months to collect members' emails on its own and begin to build contact lists that cannot be altered by a State download.

You can help us get started by visiting, VSEA.org/subscribe and signing up for the VSEA communications you are interested in receiving.

Thank you in advance for subscribing. Please urge your colleagues to do the same.

Quote Of The Week!

"State AOT employees have done the bulk of this work for years, and we have done it well when asked to by management—and we want to continue doing it. This is our pledge to you: tell us your timeline, and we'll show you that we're up for the challenge."

Line from a message being sent this week by VSEA AOT members to the State's top official, imploring him not privatize guardrail work in Vermont.

VSEA Legislative Updates Available Online

VSEA's Legislative Team has begun to post weekly updates to let members know what's been happening at the State House in Montpelier. To get the latest VSEA updates from under the Golden Dome, visit VSEA.org

VSEA 2017 Scholarship Applications Now Online!

Every year, the VSEA Scholarship & Awards Committee solicits scholarship applications from VSEA members and their spouses, dependents and domestic partners. The 2017 scholarship applications are now available online, and VSEA students who are seeking financial assistance this year in the pursuit of post-secondary educational goals can download one online at VSEA.org

Important! VSEA Moving To Electronic Balloting

When VSEA conducts its next membership vote; all members will be able to vote electronically for the first time in your union's history. **Members can still receive a ballot by U.S. Mail, but you will need to let VSEA know that this is your preference as soon as possible!** Failure to inform VSEA that you would prefer your ballot via the U.S. Mail could result in you not being able to cast a vote on important decisions that impact the VSEA membership at large.

If you want to continue to cast your vote via U.S. Mail, please send an email to vsea@vsea.org or letter to VSEA headquarters, attention "My Voting Preference", 155 State Street, Montpelier, 05602.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important notice.

What's VSEA Done For Vermont State Employees? See For Yourself

A lot has happened since the VSEA was officially recognized in 1944 as the voice for Vermont's state employee workforce, and VSEA's Communications Department has now compiled many of your union's notable victories and achievements in a new online chronological history of the VSEA.

"Thankfully, VSEA formed a special committee in the mid-eighties to put together a historical synopsis of what had happened within the union from 1944 to then, and it was a great piece for us to build from," explains VSEA Communications Director Doug Gibson. "This up-to-date history will hopefully help educate more VSEA members about the fights and campaigns of past state employees, reminding them how long it actually took for workers to get to where they are today, in terms of wages, benefits and working conditions. We hope it will be a good resource and tool for members."

View VSEA's new online history timeline at VSEA.org

Threatened While On The Job? VSEA Wants To Know.

VSEA President Dave Bellini is asking all state employees who are threatened while performing your job duties to provide an account of the threat not only to your supervisor or the State, but also to VSEA.

"VSEA wants to begin to compile its own record of threats against frontline state employees, no matter your occupation," explains Bellini. "I'm asking all employees who are threatened, especially those working in AHS, to take a few minutes to fill out an online form VSEA made to collect your report. The information will help us provide a firsthand account of the number of threats being made and where they are being made, in addition to some other things."

If you are a state employee who is threatened on the job, please click [here](#) to find the online report form, **which will remain confidential**, unless otherwise approved by you.

Upcoming Meetings/Events/Holidays:

April 18

Organizer's Monthly Worksite Meeting – WRJ
State Office Building
Room 120
118 Prospect Street
White River Junction
12:00 p.m.

April 19

Organizer's Monthly Worksite Meeting – Springfield
State Office Building
First Floor Conference Room
100 Mineral Street
Springfield
12:00 p.m.

April 20

Child & Elder Care Committee Meeting
VSEA HQ
Montpelier

9:00 a.m.

April 20

AOT Executive Committee Meeting
VSEA HQ
Montpelier
9:00 a.m.

April 20

Organizer's Monthly Worksite Meeting – Morrisville
State Office Building
Main Conference Room
63 Professional Drive
Morrisville
12:00 p.m.

April 21

NMU Bargaining Team Meeting
VTrans Training Center
1716 U.S. Route 302
Berlin
9:00 a.m.

April 21

Chapter Presidents Committee Meeting
VSEA HQ
Montpelier
9:30 a.m.

April 22

Earth Day "March For Science"
Washington, D.C.