



Flash!

SEPTEMBER

Bob Lennox, Secretary - Treasurer

2007

Automotive, Industrial and Allied Workers

TEAMSTERS LOCAL 495

WINNING FAIR WAGES...
 Automotive - Bakery & Laundry - Car & Truck
 Rental - Dairy - Disney Enterprises -
 Food - Freight - California Racetracks -
 Port - Warehouse

En Español

Welcome to the TEAMSTERS Local 495 Website

Log On!

Local 495 Launches Redesigned Web Site: www.teamsters495.org

Available in both English and Spanish, the site is highlighted by a new drop-down menu feature that makes accessing the important information you're looking for quick and easy, plus streaming audio and online publications.

Take Action

495 Flash Monthly Newsletter

Membership Guide

IBT.org

Short Stewards

Register to Vote

WRITE

BEST OF THE WEB

Workers Independent News
 Listen Now!
www.LaborRadio.org



Some Important Issues

by Robert M. Lennox

In August, Homeland Security Chief Michael Chertoff announced that his department will be engaging in a new crackdown on illegal immigration in this country.

This is alarming on several levels and should have all of us worried, and outraged. One of the new regulations he highlighted, and which is scheduled to begin this month, will be cross-referencing social security numbers of employees.

This should have every company – and employee – extremely concerned; the error rate in the Social Security data system for U.S. citizens is estimated to be as high as 11 percent. Under Chertoff's plan, businesses would be forced to fire workers with a social security discrepancy or they'll face civil fines.

Because Congress has failed to come up with an immigration reform policy, the Bush administration is using the Office of Homeland Security to start punishing not only undocumented workers, but all working Americans. Imagine going to work and finding out you've been fired because there was a typo on your social security documentation. This new tactic is a disgraceful and offensive way for the Bush administration to address illegal immigration.

I am urging every member to check their social security numbers against what your employer has on record. If there is a discrepancy, report it to your payroll department immediately. Your union is here to help you as well. If you discover an error and are not getting immediate assistance from your employer, contact the Local without delay. We will be able to assist you. As we go



to press, the AFL-CIO filed a court injunction to delay the program. The Bush Administration is appealing.

On a different note and just as distressing are the new figures announced in late August noting the number of uninsured Americans. Nearly 16 percent of our population – 47 million people – now don't have health care insurance. Of that, one in nine children – 11.7 percent – aren't covered. These numbers are a disturbing travesty.

While you and your eligible dependents have the peace of mind knowing you have secure, job-based health care coverage, this should be of concern to all of us. Foremost, the new figures should serve as a reminder that the time has never been better for all of us to use our benefits wisely. Staying within your network and using contracted facilities and services, saving emergency room visits for true emergencies, and even simple steps such as choosing generic equivalent drugs over expensive name-brand prescriptions, all save money. And every penny we can save now will help preserve benefits in the future.

Additionally, the growing number of uninsured Americans strains the U.S. healthcare system, inevitably costing those of us with insurance more money. We see this through rising co-pay costs, and higher premiums and deductibles – all used to help offset the cost of caring for the uninsured.

SPECIAL NOTICE

Due to unexpected building maintenance repairs, the General Membership Meetings for the months of October, November and December 2007 will be held at the union hall of Teamsters Local 986, 1221 N. Peck Road, South El Monte, CA 91733 at their regularly scheduled times.

VW Contract Ratification

A three-year contract has been overwhelmingly ratified by the Los Angeles Parts Depot Center of Volkswagen of America. The vote was 49 to 1.

Warehouse members in Ontario approved the three-year contract that brings pay increases, full Maintenance of Medical Benefits, and substantial increases to pensions. It allows members to cash out one week of vacation each year and to use vacation in one-day increments as personal days. In addition, unused sick days can now be cashed out for as much as 200 percent annually.

The contract was negotiated by a committee that included Business Agent Jim Lennox, Chief Shop Steward Kenny Gunn, Alternate Steward Sean Okada, Kim Dick and John Nevarez. Secretary-Treasurer Bob Lennox, who monitors all negotiations, praised the committee members. "They were very knowledgeable, instrumental and determined," he said. "And they had the trust and support of their entire membership."

Chief Shop Steward Kenny Gunn



called the five-day negotiations intense but fair. "We have a pretty good relationship with management and we listened carefully to each other," he recalled. "Everyone was level-headed and we proceeded in a professional manner."

Gunn was especially pleased by the company agreeing to provide the same level of medical benefits at no additional cost to the members for the life of the contract. He noted that based on prior years, premium increases could be more than ten percent a year. "The company knows we've earned it," he said, noting that production has increased 115 percent with a 50 percent reduction in the workforce.

Instrumental in supplying VW and Audi parts to the Western states,

the warehouse personnel receive, store, and ship everything from engines to mirrors, transmissions to radio knobs. The company has been under Teamster contract since the 1960's.

"These some of the hardest working men and women I know," summed up Business Agent Jim Lennox. "They perform their jobs better than any other VW warehouse in the country. And deserve a quality contract."



"They were very knowledgeable, instrumental and determined,"
-Secretary Treasurer
Bob Lennox



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HOME ON THE WEB: www.teamsters495.org

Local 495 is very pleased to announce the launch of our newly redesigned web site.



It's been over a year in the making, but by all accounts, the effort spent has been worth every minute.

Your new 'Home on the Web' was updated specifically to meet the online needs of our dynamic and diverse membership. Available in both English and Spanish text, site is highlighted by a new drop-down menu feature that makes accessing the important information you're looking for quick and easy.

**In English
and
En Español**

When you scroll over each of the seven sections on the home page, the pages in those sections are now highlighted and 'drop down' so you're just a click away from finding what you need.

DROP DOWN MENUS

Membership ▼	People
Your Contract ▶	
Union Rights and Responsibilities ▶	
How to Get Involved ▶	How to Get Involved
Benefits of Membership ▶	Help Us Organize
Teamster Privilege Programs ▶	Attend Meetings
Online Membership Guide	Political Action
Notary Services	D.R.I.V.E.
Update Your Info	



Take Action!



Current and past issues of Flash Newsletter



Download a complete Membership Guide



Shop Stewards Only

STREAMING AUDIO

A novel feature to the new site is the WIN (Workers Independent News) button on the home page. This innovative addition features the latest technology providing our members with up-to-date labor news in a streaming audio format.



Your new web site also includes updated and expanded Membership and Stewards' guides in the easily downloadable Adobe PDF format.

"We spent a great deal of time working on the new site because it is such a critical information tool for our members."

— Local 495 Secretary-Treasurer Bob Lennox

"We wanted the new site to be relevant and fresh, while containing significant membership information. I think that we have greatly enhanced our award-winning site."

The Local 495 web site was recently recognized by Pacific Media Group as one of the best labor union web sites on the internet, Lennox said.

INFO FOR NEW MEMBERS

He also noted that the new site was redesigned for potential members, as well. Visitors to the site will find a host of information about Local 495, organizing and the many advantages that come with a Teamster membership.

FUN FOR FAMILY, TOO

Additionally, a great feature to the site that the whole family can enjoy is the Best of the Web section. A simple click will take you to the most popular web sites on the internet. To make it even easier, we've separated the sites by categories such as health and education.

"Members will notice the brilliant new design, powerful color scheme and novel layout from the moment they click on the new site," Lennox said, adding, "I think the site is something all of our members can be proud of."

Get Active — INTERActive!

The new Local 495 web site has unique and novel features that are interactive and can help you stay informed!

The time has never been more important for members to be politically informed and educated. Members can now be linked directly with the IBT's government affairs office in Washington, D.C. through our web site.

By clicking on Teamsters Take Action button, you can sign up to get important email updates, learn about the latest laws and policy changes taking place on Capitol Hill, write your

congressman, sign petitions, and much, much more.

Click on the WIN – Workers Independent News – button and timely labor news is instantly brought to you in a streaming audio format. This state-of-the-art feature allows you to stay on the cutting edge of news and information that affects your Teamster brothers and sisters and all working Americans across the nation.

Need to register to vote, check your polling place or change your address with your local elections office? You can find all the forms and answers

you'll need by clicking on the VOTE icon on your new web site.

Knowing your union rights – and your rights on the job – is critical. Stay updated and informed by reading our updated online Membership Guide, and the important stories featured in The Flash Newsletter which not only comes in the mail, but is offered on the Local 495 web site as well.



Link to IBT Website



Register to Vote



Write to Your Representatives



Link to Your Favorite Websites on the Internet

Hertz Contract Ratification

Following lengthy and often contentious bargaining sessions, Local 495 members working at multiple Hertz airport facilities have overwhelmingly ratified a new five-year agreement.

The new contract includes 250 rental representatives, instant return reps and gold runners working at LAX, Burbank, Orange County/Newport Beach, Ontario and Long Beach airports.

“On behalf of the bargaining committee and the Local union, we are very proud of the package we brought to the membership,” Local 495 Business Agent Jim Lennox noted. “The committee worked long and hard to bring a contract to the members that they can take great pride in.”

In addition to Jim Lennox and Local 495 Secretary-Treasurer Bob Lennox, the negotiating committee consisted of a number of shop stewards and member-elected participants from each of the facilities: Barbara Baarsma, Nicki Taylor, Arthur Cates, Pam Duffy, Michelle

Wysoki and Jason Thomas. (LAX); Mira Lajcaj (Ontario); Bobbie Gibson (Burbank); Joyce Sessoms (Long Beach); and Bente Hulgreen (Orange Co.).

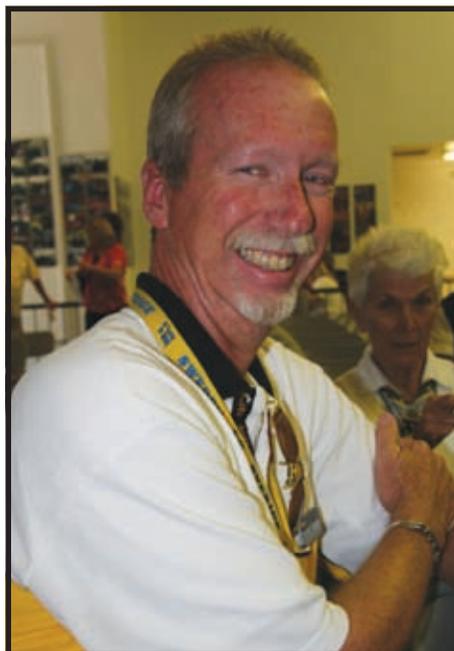
“I have to thank Bob and Jim so much. They worked very hard for us.”

- Nicki Taylor

“We had a wonderful committee; everyone worked very hard,” Shop Steward Nicki Taylor said. “We ended up with a good contract with some good, positive changes and no take-aways.”

Lennox said the agreement was a fair and equitable settlement for the membership that includes a

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continuation of the company-based health and benefits. “We have finally convinced the company — after decades of trying — to combine all five locations under one agreement,” he explained. “This is significant because it will unify the members and give more voice to the bargaining unit.”

Although Local 495 enjoys good labor-management relations with Hertz, Taylor said that there were moments of great stress and tension during the negotiations.

“We ended up with a very good contract, but it got emotional at times because there was a point when we didn’t think we’d get there. We were talking about people’s lives, and you feel a tremendous amount of responsibility. When things aren’t going so well, it can get very emotional,” she recalled.

“I have to thank Bob and Jim so much. They worked very hard for us. They’ve always supported us and they were right there with us,” she said, adding, “They are two terrific guys and we are lucky to have them.”



BEWARE!

Most of the Republicans running for President are campaigning on the Bush style health savings accounts platform. This is the scheme where each American receives a tax credit and then goes out to buy their own coverage. Does this sound like healthcare reform to you, or just another big business plan to shift the cost burden of healthcare to the backs of every American? Please get involved. Use your Local 495 website to help fight for change. Go to our homepage, and register on our TAKE ACTION BUTTON. Once registered, you will receive weekly pre-formatted messages you can send to your elected representatives, just hit the send button and you can register your position to Congress and The Senate. Let your voice be heard!



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Visit your union web site
www.teamsters495.org

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