



# the *Workers' Voice*

## Ohio Alliance for Retired Americans Actions Planned Early 2009



**Submitted by: Norm Wernet**

The Ohio Alliance for Retired Americans and its labor and community affiliates are focused on getting the change we fought for in the November election.

The leadership of the Alliance and its Community Advocacy Network partnerships are meeting on February 13 to discuss the future of Medicare, Social Security and Pensions and the activities and actions being planned around the state to focus on these national issues. This meeting planned before the new Congress convened is a kick off to at home in district meetings being sought with our Congressional Representative during the following week's Presidential Holiday recess.

Alliance of Informed Citizens in Northwest Ohio held an area roundtable in January to explore the rate setting process with Public Utilities Commissioner Cheryl Roberto. We learned about the pros and cons of the recent electric utility legislation. The consensus of the leadership is that further regulatory legislation may be needed to make rates affordable

for retirees and seniors. Informed Citizens set April 27 for a public forum: "Did You Know". Governor Strickland has been invited to keynote the session that will feature information on healthcare and prevention of elder abuse and neglect.

Senior Voice! the Community Advocacy Network based in the Cleveland metro area met with the staff of Congressional Representatives Sutton and Kucinich to jump start the new session of Congress and presented our concerns about fixing Medicare. The primary concern is that Medicare funding needs to be addressed and stabilized while costly supplements to private insurance and drug companies need to be stopped. Senior Voice! got a positive response from both members who have stood strongly with us on the issues. Senior Voice! is seeking funding to continue its educational outreach to retirees and seniors in activity and living centers in the whole of the Northshore.

Alliance for Senior Action held a public forum in Girard, Ohio during the fourth quarter of 2008. The success of its first forum, which gathered 200 are retirees, has led to planning for 2009 for another. Congressman Ryan and State Senator Cafaro highlighted the legislative need for a grassroots advocacy and lobby to push a pro senior agenda. ASA has recently brokered a meeting with area county commissioners to discuss issues arising out of a senior levy and the process for allocation and accounting of the funds to providers of senior services. It appears the brokered meeting helped

## Retired

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build confidence among the parties and resolve some community tension.

The Ohio Alliance for Retired Americans will hold its spring convention April 14 in Columbus at the Local 189 Plumbers and Pipefitters Hall 1250 Kinnear Rd. Following this year's theme of making the change we fought for real, the convention will review the status of federal and state legislation that impacts retirement security and the quality of life after a life at work. The new initiatives to fund education in Ohio and the long term care Medicaid budget along with the Diabetes Cost Reduction Act will be among the state legislation

being reviewed. The Alliance is focused nationally on eliminating the inefficient subsidies to private insurers and drug companies and improving Medicare along with funding of the Elder Justice Act to provide protective services to abused and neglected older American. The need to protect pensions and secure the funding of Social Security, continue to be major priorities to be addressed by the Congress.

The Alliance for Retired American has planned its national legislative conference for June 15-18 at the Hilton Washington and Towers. All retiree affiliates in Ohio are encouraged to send delegates watch for information on the web [www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org).

# North Coast Moving Forward To Restoring The American Middle Class

**Submitted by: Les Wiley**

In the North Coast ALF we are promoting the Employee Free Choice Act in all our CLC's. The North Shore CLC had their meeting in a box on The Employee Free Choice Act January 13th, 2009. They had 42 delegates in attendance and 29 of them wrote letters in support of the Employee Free Choice Act to their elected leaders. The Ashtabula CLC will have their meeting in a box on Tuesday February 10th, 2009 and Lorain CLC will have theirs on Thursday February 12th, 2009.

The Retiree Council of the Ashtabula AFL-CIO was one of the sponsors of a Town Hall meeting held Saturday January 24th, 2009 on Building Unity in the Community and Why We Need Comprehensive Immigration Reform at the People's Baptist Church in Ashtabula.

The USW along with other Cleveland Unions held an informational demonstration in response to Wire-Nets anti-Employee Free Choice Act activities on Thursday January 28th, 2009.

Peoples Weekly World sponsored an Awards dinner on Friday January 30th, 2009 honoring Harriett Applegate,



Executive Secretary North Shore CLC and Mary Keith, Chairperson Ohio ACORN as unsung heroes of the 2008 elections.

North Shore CLC

held their annual Strategic planning meeting on Wednesday February 4th, 2009.

Cleveland Jobs with Justice held its annual Strategic Planning Meeting on Friday February 6th, 2009. Jobs with Justice in Cleveland is sponsoring an event Tuesday February 10th, 2009 to be held at Teamsters local 407 at 3320 Superior Ave. Cleveland, Ohio 44114. It will be the Republic Windows and Doors sit down strikers from UE Local 1110 resistance and recovery speaking tour and celebration. It will be free and open to the public with free parking.

Lorain CLC Political Action Committee will be having their annual spaghetti dinners with silent auction fundraiser on March 1st, 2009 at St. John's Hall on Homewood Ave. in Lorain, Ohio. It will be from noon to 3 PM.

# Northwest Ohio Continues Its Effort in Support of the Employee Free Choice Act

**Submitted by: Laura Faught**

All across Northwest Ohio, working people are getting involved in the campaign to pass the Employee Free Choice Act. After working to elect a pro-labor candidate to the White House, they are realizing the effect that active participation has on the political process. The Employee Free Choice Act will help to rebuild the middle class, a group that has been consistently and systematically squeezed dry by corporate greed. Workers here are fed up and are ready for positive change to come to their communities.

Gary McPheron, Marketing Representative from the Painters and Allied Trades District Council 6, had this to say about EFCA:

“The need for Employee Free Choice Act in West Central Ohio has never been greater. Major retailers and restaurants impose wage and hour decreases at will, often causing long term employees to lose benefits. Meanwhile, construction companies cut pay of workers



*IBEW member Ken Erdmann addressing the Toledo Area AFL-CIO Delegates. Photo by Laura Harrison*

regularly, so they can underbid other companies in a race to the bottom. Workers need a voice to represent them when economic times are bad even more than when they are good. The Lima City Council unanimously passed a resolution of support for EFCA proving even a politically diverse group realizes the importance of this legislation. Please do everything you can to help pass EFCA, now is our time to change the path of the middle class in this country.”

Ken Erdmann, Assistant Business Manager of IBEW Local 245, spoke to a delegation of over 60 people at the Toledo Area AFL-CIO meeting last month. The crowd was inspired to write letters to Senator Voinovich asking him to support EFCA, and many delegates took materials with them in order to present the information to their own members and continue the letter writing campaign. George Shafer, President of the West Central Labor Council, also presented the EFCA materials and all of the delegates present wrote letters and committed to leaflet their worksites.



*The West Central Labor Council writing letters to Senator George Voinovich: Photo by Gary McPheron*

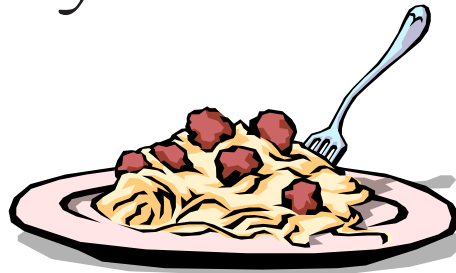
 Broadcast Yourself	<b>Ohio AFL-CIO Is Now On YouTube</b>	 Broadcast Yourself
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AFL-CIO ACTION COMMITTEE  
PRESENTS

*The Annual Spaghetti Dinner  
with Silent Auction - 2009*

Make Plans To Join Us On  
Sunday, March 1, 2009

**Serving:**  
12:00 PM - 3:00 PM  
Includes beverage



**Donation:**  
\$10 Adults  
\$8 Retirees  
\$6 Children (6-12)

*Free meal to all Labor Leaders 5 & under!*

*As Always, This Is A Family Affair! Mark Your Calendars And We Hope To See You There!*

*Return this portion with payment*

**SPAGHETTI DINNER TICKETS**

Enclosed is payment for ticket numbers \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGN ADVERTISING**

Enclosed is payment for \_\_\_\_\_ signs at \$25.00 each

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

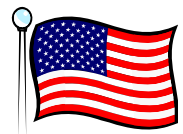
**GRAND TOTAL \$** \_\_\_\_\_

*Company, Candidate or individual message* \_\_\_\_\_

Remember, No Corporate Checks.  
Please return this bottom portion with your check made payable to the



**Lorain County AFL-CIO Action Committee  
2089 N. Ridge Road East, Lorain 44055**



**THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

IF YOU HAVE SILENT AUCTION ITEMS PLEASE CONTACT JUDY DESKINS AT 440-245-5259.

PAID FOR BY LORAIN CO. AFL-CIO ACTION COMMITTEE, TIM FERGUS, TREASURER, 2089 N. RIDGE RD., EAST, LORAIN OH 44055



# Members and Laid-Off Workers Urged to Attend United Way Tax Class to Learn About EITC

## *Area Residents Encouraged to Utilize Free Tax Assistance & Receive Federal Tax Credits*

Don't leave money on the table that could be helping you and your family ... and don't sacrifice your hard-earned money for a short-lived loan. Those are the messages that community leaders representing the Earned Income Tax Credit Coalition want to impart to hard-working families this tax season.

Dayton City Commissioner Dean Lovelace and United Way of the Greater Dayton Area President Marc Levy were joined by representatives of local financial institutions, nonprofit agencies, and the IRS to announce details of this year's Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) campaign. The EITC is now worth more money than ever before - up to \$4,716 for eligible families. In addition, many EITC-eligible families also qualify for the Child Tax Credit, worth up to \$1,000 for each child under age 17.

The local coalition is promoting the Earned Income Tax Credit to low-income working families and individuals as an effective tool to increase their financial stability. The goal of the campaign is to provide free tax assistance to help working families take advantage of federal tax credits when they file their income tax returns and avoid the dangers of quick loan offers that prey on low-income workers and carry hidden costs.

"Based on the average EITC return, an additional one million dollars could be returned to the pockets of hard-working families and boost the local economy," Levy said. "This extra income helps many families pay their bills, purchase such things as furniture or appliances, pay for job-related expenses, and provide a better life for their children."

"The EITC and Child Tax Credit have taken on added importance during times of high unemployment," Levy said. "Families and individuals that have lost income badly need the boost these tax credits provide. The additional dollars can provide relief for families under severe economic stress, enabling them to pay back bills, avert utility shut-offs and eviction or foreclosure."

Commissioner Lovelace urged residents to be wary of companies offering to pay tax refunds without W-2 forms, know as "pay stub" loans, or other deals that offer money to the customer upfront in return for a large return payment to the lender later on. "The Coalition once again is urging local taxpayers to avoid high-cost 'instant cash' tax refund loans and 'pay stub' loans. These are very high-interest, short-term (7-14 day) loans that are a waste of your hard-earned

money," he said.

"Pay stub" loan offers and other "instant cash" loans are heavily marketed to low-income working families claiming the EITC, and nationally drain almost \$1 billion from the EITC refunds earned by these families each year. According to IRS data, 56% of Refund Anticipation Loan (RAL) borrowers in 2004 were low and moderate-income taxpayers receiving the EITC, despite the fact that EITC recipients make up only 17% of the nation's taxpayers. Nationally, one out of three EITC recipients bought a RAL in 2004. These families spend over \$900 million in RAL fees to get their tax refund monies 1-2 weeks sooner than they would receive it by filing electronically and having their refund directly deposited into their bank or credit union account.

"With the tax filing season now upon us, the Earned Income Tax Credit is an excellent way for lower wage-earners to save money on their federal tax returns," Lovelace said. "It is very important that eligible Dayton Area residents apply for the EITC and the Child Care Tax credit when they file their taxes this year. It's easy to receive the tax credits, and there are several local community organizations that will provide IRS-trained and certified volunteers who will prepare and file your tax returns at no cost."

The coalition's free tax preparation sites are open through April 15. Hours of operation include a variety of daytime, evening and Saturday hours. Interested taxpayers should phone their local United Way or the United Way HelpLink by dialing 2-1-1 on your phone.

The EITC is a federal tax benefit designed to help low-income workers increase their financial stability. It has several important purposes: to reduce payroll taxes for these workers, to supplement wages, and to make work more attractive than welfare. It is the nation's largest anti-poverty program, and it helps working families maintain their independence from the welfare system.

Members and local unions should work with the local labor liasons in your respective zones to reach out to the countless members that have been laid off in these tough economic times. We would rather see all the money eligible go into the pockets of those who need it, not companies who don't.



# CWA Local 4319 Gives Back To The Community

**Submitted by: Laura Faught**

When called on to serve their community, CWA local 4319 stepped up to the plate. Vice President, Erika White, and CWA Community Services Representative, Ann Stewart, organized a food drive on short notice in order to participate in the National Day of Service on Monday, January 19<sup>th</sup> in a tribute to Martin Luther King Jr.

"I got an email from our national union explaining that it would be part of Obama's inauguration celebration to have a National Day of Service, and I thought it was very important to get involved," said White. "The economy is in bad shape and that was one of the reasons we decided to help out our local food bank. We collected as much as we could in less than a week, but in the future we would like to give people more notice and continue to be involved in the community."

Ann Stewart is quite experienced when it comes to community involvement in Northwest Ohio. The CWA Community Services Committee had a Christmas party last year to raise money for the East Toledo Family Center.



*Ann Stewart and Erika White from CWA 4319 take part in National Day of Action.*

"We were able to sponsor a family of seven with the money that we raised to buy food, gift cards, and gas cards. The family has five boys, and they both work but are still struggling," Stewart explained. The latest activity that has been adopted by both the Community Service and Women's Committee is the Susan G. Komen for the Cure to raise money for breast cancer research. Thanks CWA!

## Tri-County CLC

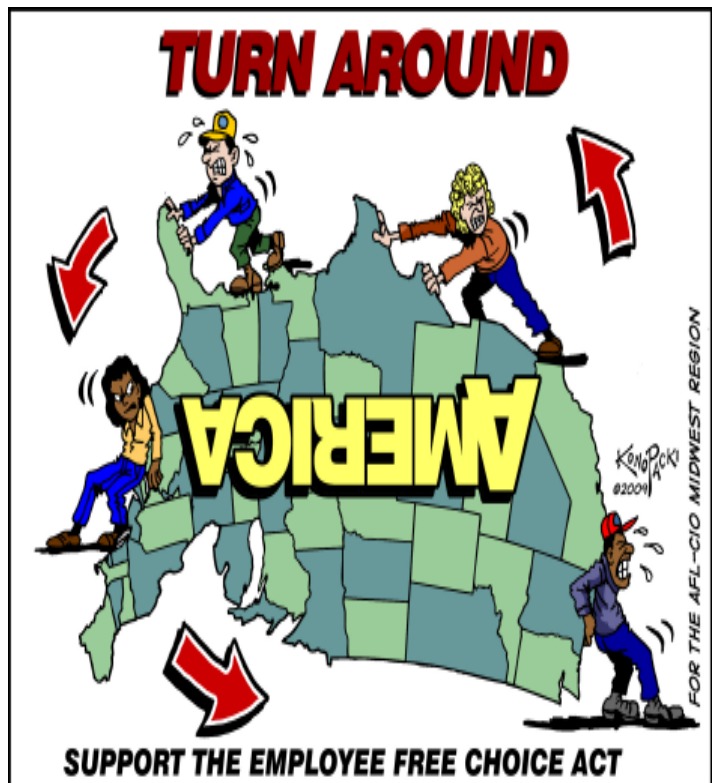
### Employee Free Choice Presentation

Date: Monday, February 23  
Time: 6:30pm  
Where: 720 Wolf Ledges PKWY  
Akron, OH

### Reverse Raffle

Date: Thursday, April 9  
Time: 6:00pm  
Where: 3204 Ridgeway  
Akron, OH

More info Contact: John Wagner  
330-253-2111



# 2009 Ohio AFL-CIO Legislative Conference

April 22-23, 2009



The Ohio AFL-CIO's Biennial Legislative Conference will be held April 22-23, 2009 at The Renaissance Hotel, 50 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Columbus, OH 43215.

The registration for the Conference will be \$75 per participant. Please make your check payable to the Ohio AFL-CIO and mail it with the form to the Ohio AFL-CIO attn: Legislative Conference, 395 E. Broad St., Suite 300, Columbus, Ohio 43215. For more information, to make your payment or to receive a registration form, please call Amanda Sabol at 614-221-8271 or [asabol@ohafclcio.org](mailto:asabol@ohafclcio.org)

We have made arrangements with the hotel to set aside a block of rooms for Wednesday night (4/22) for those who will be attending the Conference. Please make your hotel room reservations directly with the hotel by calling 800-417-1057. When making your reservation, identify yourself as being with the Ohio AFL-CIO to ensure the special rate of \$119 plus tax for a single or double. Parking will be \$10.00 for overnight valet and day of event parking, one vehicle per room, based upon availability. Please keep in mind that the **room cut-off date is March 30, 2009**. We suggest you make your hotel reservation as early as possible.

## Contact information for the Ohio AFL-CIO Workforce Development Program - Rapid Response

### Field Staff Representatives

Pamela Fox - Southeast 614-330-2378

Sue Grazia - Northeast 216-392-0049

Tina Kavanaugh - Southwest 614-330-2379

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### Director

Marcia Tolles 614-330-2397

**Office:** 395 East Broad Street Columbus, Ohio 43215 \* 614-223-1047

# Central Ohio Labor Council AFL-CIO

## 50th Anniversary

Date: Thursday March 26, 2009

Location: Villa Milano  
1630 Schrock Road

Time: Cocktails 6:00 p.m.  
Dinner 7:00 p.m.

Tickets: \$65 per-person  
\$500 per table (seats 8)

### PROGRAM SPONSORSHIP AVAILABLE

Full page (8½X11) for \$300

Half page=\$200; Quarter page=\$125; Business card=\$100

**Deadline for ad's is February 20, 2009**

Send or e-mail your camera-ready logo to the  
Central Ohio Labor Council, AFL-CIO, 1545 Alum Creek Dr., 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl.  
Columbus, OH 43209:

Phone 614-257-1920

Rick@columbusaflcio.com

Make your check payable to Central Ohio Labor Council, AFL-CIO



# CENTRAL OHIO LABOR COUNCIL AFL-CIO

1545 ALUM CREEK DRIVE, 2ND FLOOR, COLUMBUS, OHIO 43209  
Phone 614/257-1920 • FAX 614/257-1929

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Roberta Skok

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Richard Kirk

Every year, during the months September to January, Organized Labor does it part to help raise funds to cloth needy school children. This includes home visits and letting the families know where to go to get their clothing. Each child receives a coat, 3 shirts, 6 pairs of underwear, 3 pants, 6 pairs of socks, 2 pairs of shoes, a hat, gloves, backpack and dictionary.

Your representatives from Organized Labor taking the time to insure these children and families are assisted include:

- Jack Huber, CWA 4320
- Bill Dobbins, UIW
- Darrell Gammell, Plumbers & Pipefitters 189
- Theo James, TWU 208
- Jack Gordon, Teamsters
- Larry Mitchell, Ohio AFL-CIO
- Walter Workman, Central Ohio AFL-CIO Labor Council
- Homer Cordle, Labor Liaison with the Central Ohio Labor Council

These representatives are responsible for completing over 500 home visits and clothing over 1,085 children just in the South end of Columbus. With donations from local unions and Veterans clubs, organized labor was responsible for collecting over \$20,000 for Charity Newsies.

Sincerely,

  
Walt Workman