

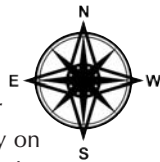
conference

DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

Calling All Delegates!

It's time again to start planning for the 2009 Delegate Assembly that will be held at the Fergus Falls Best Western - Bigwood Event Center on **April 24th and 25th!** Please register your Delegates and Alternates as soon as possible. Registration information will be mailed to all Chief Stewards or members may register online at: www.msea-mn.com.

Orientation



There will be a half-hour introductory session for all new Delegates and Alternates at the Assembly on Friday, April 24th at 12:00PM. Members new to the Assembly can attend this meeting to review the agenda items, printed materials, voting procedures and general protocol. This is an opportunity for new attendees to ask questions and hopefully become more comfortable before the Assembly begins. Designed for "rookies" but all members are welcome!

Banquet Theme - 50's & 60's

"You're The One That I Want" at our 29th Delegate Assembly! We'll "Flash Back" to the **50's and 60's** era (Grease) so dig out those poodle skirts and dust off your saddle shoes (prizes awarded). Join us for an evening of 50's and 60's food, music, memories and yes we'll even "stroll" to the bar for a "sock hop".

DA Prep - Spring Regionals

Spring Regional meetings are now underway to help Delegates, Alternates and Chief Stewards prepare for the upcoming Assembly. Discussion items will include:

- *resolutions submitted for consideration
- *MSEA Board positions up for election
- *unit awards and member recognition

Please refer to the Regional meeting schedule on page 2 of this newsletter. Delegates and Alternates should make a special effort to attend their Regional!

Member Research Study Results

Sometimes you need to take a look at things in a little different light. That was the idea behind a "Member Research Study" that was done at the request of your Board of Directors. The study was completed in December 2008. The results of this study will help in developing a strategic long term plan to move this organization in a direction that will lead to better service, more member involvement and better communications.

Your Board of Directors wanted to know what matters most to members: Are we meeting your needs? Do you value your MSEA affiliation? What areas are we weak? Strong? Do we communicate well with you the members? In order to develop a long-term plan, the Board wanted to know what members thought. The Research Study was part of that process, albeit, a limited part. We still want to know how you would answer some of the questions listed above. As you read the following results keep in mind your own thoughts about MSEA. We want to know! Good or bad. If you want to voice your opinion, contact me at: (gary@msea-mn.com or 651-261-1693) All information that you provide is confidential.

The following is a brief summary of the Member Research Study:



1. Members are interested in their union and want more information. Interest wanes due to a perceived lack of representation, visibility and communication.
2. Service issues need to be improved
3. New member communication must be put in place
4. More visibility: training, meetings, new member orientation, membership cards and more awareness of the benefits of belonging to MSEA (Member Handbook).

Please, take the time to think about some of these things and let me know your honest opinion. The more input we have the better we can prepare to provide you with better service.

MSEA

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GOOD TO KNOW

MSEA Scholarship Glitch

MSEA recently discovered a problem with the online link for the Nancy Crippen Educational Scholarship on the MSEA website. Although the problem was corrected on January 20th, we cannot be sure how long the link had been malfunctioning. We are asking everyone who submitted an online MSEA scholarship application from September 1, 2008 through January 20, to please resubmit their application.

We apologize for the inconvenience but want to make sure that we've actually received everyone's scholarship application before the **March 1st** deadline. Please help us alert other full members as well. Thanks so much for your patience!

www.msea-mn.com

Spring Regionals Underway

ATTENTION: Delegates, Alternates and Chief Stewards - the MSEA Spring Regionals are now underway! Help prepare for the Delegate Assembly by attending your Regional meeting to learn about upcoming resolutions, Board elections and more. Plus it's a great opportunity to share ideas, brainstorm and network with other unit leaders!

This year why not make a special effort to bring at least one Alternate along to the Assembly? Being an Alternate your first year at an Assembly is a great way to sit back, observe and find out how everything works before being expected to participate as a full Delegate.

2009 spring regionals		
1&2	2/28	Bemidji - American Legion 10:00 AM
3	2/26	Moorhead - Frying Pan 6:30 PM
4	2/11	Sauk Rapids - Jimmy's Pour House 6:00 PM
5	2/18	Chaska - Perkins 5:30 PM
6	3/19	Windom - Eagle's Club 5:30 PM
7	3/10	Rochester - Old Country Buffet 6:00 PM

FROM THE PRESIDENT



It has been a very busy couple of months for the Board. We have been interviewing for the Executive Director position, working on the Strategic Plan and getting ready for the upcoming Delegate Assembly.

As of this writing we have not yet hired a new Executive Director, but we have been very lucky to have Gary Johnson on board as the Interim Executive Director. Gary has been doing an outstanding job during the limited time he has been with MSEA. I would personally like to thank him for the job he is doing, and if you get the chance, take a moment and thank him too.

I would like to briefly talk about a problem that surfaced during the Member Research Study that the Board requested to help prepare for the Strategic Plan. It was brought to our attention that some fair share fee payers are not aware that MSEA represents them too. It is important for all fair share fee payers to understand that they are part of MSEA as well as their local unit. I know it's difficult for some full members, but MSEA and the local leadership have to represent fair share fee payers. With that said, one of the best ways to solve this problem is to talk with your fair share fee payers and convince them to become full members. Explain to them the benefits of being a full member, such as the right to vote, a \$2000 life insurance benefit and others. Also explain to them that being a full member makes your unit stronger, especially when it comes time to negotiate a new contract.

The Delegate Assembly this year is very important. We have four Board positions open; President, Vice President and two Director positions. If you are considering running for the Board, please send in your candidate form to the MSEA office as soon as possible. Also, I hope all units send at least one Delegate to the Assembly. As a democratic organization, it is important that all units are represented. It is a great opportunity for your unit's voice to be heard.

In Unity,
Evan Mapes, MSEA President

quote

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

"We're ready to take the offense for organized labor. It's time we have a President who didn't choke saying the word 'union.' We need to strengthen our unions by letting them do what they do best - organize our workers. If a majority of workers want a union, they should get a union. It's that simple."

organizing

NOW IS THE TIME

Hard Times....MSEA Can Help!

During times of economic downturns, many workers seek union membership to protect the current wages, benefits and schedules they enjoy. The State of Minnesota recently released its economic projection for the next few years and it is dire—a **\$4.5 billion dollar shortfall**.

With educational spending being roughly 60% of all state spending, it is anticipated that schools will be hit the hardest by this budget crisis. MSEA is working tirelessly to reach out to unorganized workers in the state to let them know that we are here to help them, if they so choose.

As a current member, look for opportunities to spread the word about the benefits of union membership. Talk about your current benefits, ability to work out grievances with your employer and the great service that your field representative offers you. If you do hear from someone who may be interested in joining a union, please don't hesitate to contact the St. Paul office and let us know!

[JOKE]

the driving test

A professional juggler, driving to his next performance, is stopped by the police.

"What are you doing with these matches and lighter fluid in your car?" asks the police officer.

"I'm a juggler and I juggle flaming torches in my act."

"Oh yeah? Let's see you do it," says the officer.

So the juggler gets out and starts juggling the blazing torches masterfully.

A couple driving by slows down to watch. "Wow," says the driver to his wife. "I'm glad I quit drinking. Look at the test they're giving now!"

new benefit!

TAKE NOTICE

New Housing Benefit

In our continuing efforts to promote full union membership, MSEA strives to offer valuable and timely member-only benefits. Through a new relationship with the EAH Benefits, Inc. (Employer Assisted Housing Benefits), MSEA is proud to now offer **Housing Benefits** for all full members. This free benefit provides professional real estate representation and assistance regarding the following:



- **Buying a home.** Whether it is your first home, second, investment, cabin or vacation property – members have access to hundreds of professional representatives in Minnesota ready to help.
- **Selling a home.** Including home valuation and marketing. Designated professionals with the experience and background to represent you and your best interests.
- **Locating a lender** in your area.
- **Assistance with credit repair** and education through referrals to state agencies.
- **Online** real estate information. For additional information, use the website address below or click on the Housing Benefit link on the front page of the MSEA website: www.msea-mn.com.
- **Toll-free hotline** staffed 24/7 ready to assist you with your real estate needs.
- **Education** regarding up-to-the-minute finance programs and incentives. The recently passed Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 is the type of helpful information MSEA members will now be able to receive. This act includes a \$7,500 tax credit for first-time buyers, good until July 1, 2009. Prospective buyers now have a major financial incentive to explore the advantages of buying a home in a buyer's market. The IRS is not in the business of publicizing new tax benefits, so MSEA members now have one more way to learn about and take full advantage of the new law as well as other programs.

For More Information

To learn more, contact EAH Benefits, Inc., A Minnesota Corp.

800.418.9917

www.mseahousing.com

MSEA & AFSCME Council 65 - DAY ON THE HILL 2009

Crowne Plaza Hotel

11 East Kellogg Boulevard, St Paul, MN tele: 651.292.1900

Monday, March 2, 2009 6:00-9:00 PM Evening Reception (Legislators & Governor Candidates invited)

Tuesday, March 3, 2009 MSEA & AFSCME Council 65 DAY ON THE HILL

- 8:00-9:45 AM Registration
- 9:00 AM Women's Caucus
- 10:00 AM Welcome/General Assembly
House Leadership
Senate Leadership
15 minute Budget Overview
- 11:30 AM Mini Break
- Council 65 Political Liaison & Former Senator Ron Dicklich
Auditor Rebecca Otto – issues in local government (invited)
Secretary Mark Ritchie – proud election integrity (confirmed)
HOUSE LEADERSHIP PANEL – Two Democrats & Two Republicans (invited)
- 12:45-1:00 PM Buses to Capitol
- 1:00-2:00 PM Legislative Regional & Judicial Employee Breakouts (at Capitol)
- 2:00-4:00 PM Appointments with legislators by district

MSEA & AFSCME Council 65 - DAY ON THE HILL 2009 Registration Form

Registrations Due: February 24th

Online Registration: www.msea-mn.com

Mail: 190 E 5th St, Suite 750, St. Paul MN 55101

Fax: 651.297.6814 or 888.329.6732 (toll free)

Name: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-Mail Address _____

School District: _____

MN Senate District _____ MN House District _____

Save Our Jobs!!!

You have a VOICE. . . .make it HEARD!!

msea

Attend MSEA's Day on the Hill **Tuesday, March 3rd**

The State of Minnesota faces a \$5 billion deficit and School Districts are facing substantial funding cuts.

We need to let our legislators know how IMPORTANT the services we provide are to our schools and how much we VALUE our jobs.

Attend Day on the Hill in St. Paul on March 3rd!

MSEA will pay a \$50 stipend and mileage to each member that attends this important event. Carpooling is encouraged. Attendees will also receive lunch and a MSEA t-shirt.

Registrations due: February 24th! Return the registration form on page 4 to the MSEA office or register online at:

www.msea-mn.com

Contact Gary Johnson with questions:

gary@msea-mn.com or 651-261-1693

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NEWS & NOTES

did you know?

MN Paraprofessional Conference Rescheduled for April 2009

The Minnesota Para Conference initially scheduled for Oct 3-4, 2008 has been **rescheduled** for April 24-25, 2009. Unfortunately that is the same weekend as MSEA's Delegate Assembly. Hopefully this won't cause a hardship for some of our members! For more information, visit the Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium website: <http://ici2.umn.edu/para/>

MSEA Dues Policy

MSEA has created a dues policy detailing how state dues are calculated and collected from our membership. This policy also describes how membership dues are adjusted, credited, billed and refunded. All Chief Stewards will receive a copy of this policy for their records. To view and/or download a pdf version of the "MSEA Dues Policy", click on the MSEA Policies link on the MSEA website: www.msea-mn.com. Contact Lynn Jansen with questions at: lynn@msea-mn.com or 800.622.0289 or 651.227.6323.

Fergus Falls High School Band Marches in Inaugural Parade

MSEA wishes to congratulate the Fergus Falls High School Marching Band for being one of only 100 units selected to march in the Inaugural Parade for President-elect Obama in Washington DC on January 20th. MSEA represents the custodians and secretaries in Fergus Falls and was therefore pleased to make a donation of \$250 to help defray some of the traveling costs of this historic opportunity! Way to go!

webTRIVIA

Don't forget to check out MSEA's monthly online trivia game at www.msea-mn.com. Visit the MSEA website from the 1st through the 14th of each month to submit your answer. Winners (drawn at random) will receive a new charcoal gray fleece vest. It's easy, fast and fun! Congratulations to our latest winner...

January 2009: Patrick Wheeler, Little Falls