

Message from Executive Director Tammy Johnson



Shout it from our mountain-tops! Unions are on the move in Wyoming!

This year we've seen new energy from workers choosing to organize in a union. The dedication and strength organizers and workers have shown to sign union cards and fight for historic contracts in a right-to-work state that has a reputation for being extremely hard to organize is worthy of the highest praise. And I for one, am telling everyone of the strides we've made this year to make a difference in our state.

For too long we've been regarded as a state with wages that aren't competitive while our jobs remain some of the most dangerous in the country but **together**, we are working to change that!

As we close out this year and look forward to 2024 let's remind ourselves of all we've accomplished:

We welcome to our union family the EMS workers in Fremont County! These workers know their value and know how to advocate for themselves! After working with USW leader Will Wilkinson, the EMS team in Fremont County overwhelmingly voted to form a union! Their contract was officially signed in mid-October, but these workers were getting the attention of their community, their elected officials, and their employer since the first of January 2023. In the end, the workers won better working conditions, pay and benefits, the county won improved and reliable EMS services, and the people of Fremont won the security and safety that comes with professional, stable EMS services.

Starbucks workers at the Cheyenne Central Avenue store organized and successfully voted to form the first Starbucks United local in Wyoming. The workers suffered a litany of union-busting attempts by management for the last several months. Workers experienced unfair treatment in scheduling, theft of personal property, a hostile workplace, and retaliation for pursuing their legal right to form a union. Like other Starbucks stores, the workers in Cheyenne have not secured a contract yet, but with legal pressures mounting on Starbucks corporate heads, they will soon be forced to come to the table. Let's support our Starbucks workers by encouraging them to hang in there until better wages, fair treatment, and union civility reigns in their workplace.

Sadly, we also recognized the many workers who died on the job in Wyoming. Wyoming continues to lead the nation in on-the-job deaths, at a rate that is 2.5 times the national average. There is no excuse for this, and it is time the governor, the legislature, OSHA, and employers put a stop to this. Please ask your legislators to implement severe consequences to employers who kill workers in the workplace. NO EXCUSES. STOP NOW.

Rising Public Sector Workers

Recently I have received a number of phone calls from public workers who are seeking a union in Wyoming. Because of our current statutory framework, public employees are prohibited from collective bargaining agreements **unless** their employer agrees to recognize the union and engage in collective bargaining. Public employees can form a union, but whether that union is recognized by the employer is a matter of choice for the employer. This is extremely complicated, but there are a few ways to convince the employer to recognize and negotiate with the union. These include voluntary recognition, a change in leadership, and public pressure.

Voluntary recognition occurs when an employer realizes that recognizing a union and collective bargaining will improve their business and the services they provide. Often this happens when the workforce is so tight that the employer fears losing experienced workers.

Leadership changes occur by voting in union supporters and voting out union detractors. This is why local elections are vitally important. If, for example, a board in your community will not allow its employees to negotiate working conditions, a simple flip of that board in the next election (November 2024) can mean public employee unions can be recognized.

Public pressure can be exerted on an existing board by highlighting the poor treatment of workers in a public sector that provides critical services to a community (think hospitals, power plants). Currently in the state, many school districts agree to meet and confer with the local teachers' associations. While meet and confer is a step in the right direction, these agreements are non-binding and can be changed any time.

If you know local public workers who desire a union, please have them call or email me. We must continue the pressure on our public officials to allow **all** workers in Wyoming to earn a fair wage, have benefits that support their family, get safely home from the job, and retire with dignity.

Your Vote Matters!



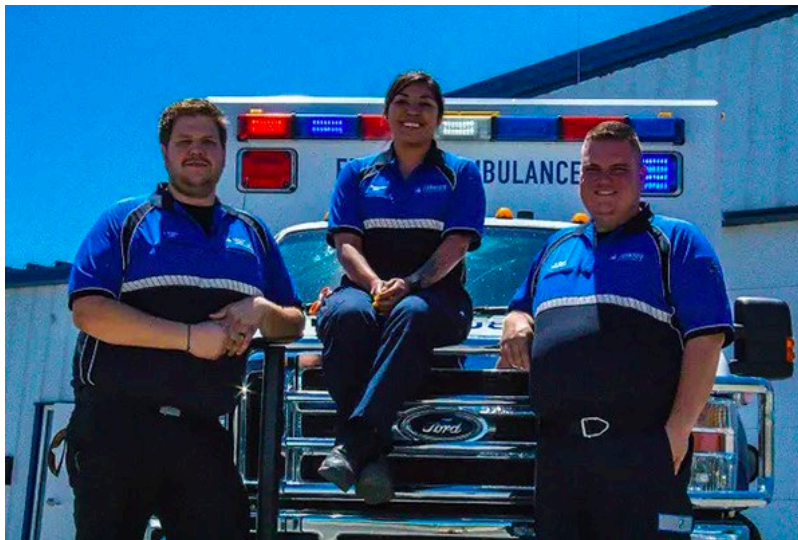
One of the projects we're currently working on and look forward to growing in 2024 is our voter registration program. By November 2024 we plan to be recognized as the leading organization

in the state dedicated to ensuring we hear from all workers in our electoral process.

Wyoming, unfortunately, has been victim to an onslaught of voter restriction policies meant to intimidate working families. One of the more restrictive policies we have is if you want to register to vote by mail you have to take your voter registration form to a notary public for them to notarize your form and only then can you mail it out. This disenfranchises thousands of people who can't always take time out of their work day to make it to the polls to register to vote.

At the Wyoming AFL-CIO this is one of the many problems we are addressing to register more voters. We've carefully selected 8 people to go through a notary public training who will be responsible for registering voters at our events. From the people who represent us in our city halls to the U.S. Congress- teachers, grocery workers, nurses, construction workers and more will be heard! We will win higher wages, better benefits and more safety on the job but we need to ensure we are electing people who represent us- not greedy corporations looking to make record profits off our labor and then choosing to shortchange us. As we take steps to create a more equitable Wyoming I look forward to keeping you all updated on our progress.

EMS Historic Victory



Congratulations to the first EMS workers to organize in Wyoming who signed their first union contract on October 18th! The workers unionized with the United Steelworkers (USW) in February and began negotiations shortly thereafter. After months of negotiations our EMS workers won a fair contract that includes up to 15% wage increases for all employees, recruitment and retention bonuses, paid vacation leave, paid sick leave, paid union leave, improved safety measures, and other gains. Since the negotiations began, other EMS groups have been reaching out to ask for help in organizing a union. We will press on and make sure

the people of Wyoming have consistent, professional, and safe emergency medical services in their communities.

Read more about our victory: [Fremont Co. EMS workers show the power and benefits of organized labor](#)