

FROM THE ARCHIVES

THE ROLLING STRIKE OF '87 AND THE FLYING SQUADRON



WHAT'S ALICE Dale trying to fool? At age 34, Dale fits the Madison Avenue image of the dress-for-success female business executive. But she is actually the executive director of the Oregon Public Employees Union, the largest of 10 labor organizations representing state employees. She is also the union's chief negotiator. Last Thursday — following a nine-day strike — the union settled with the state on a two-year contract scheduled

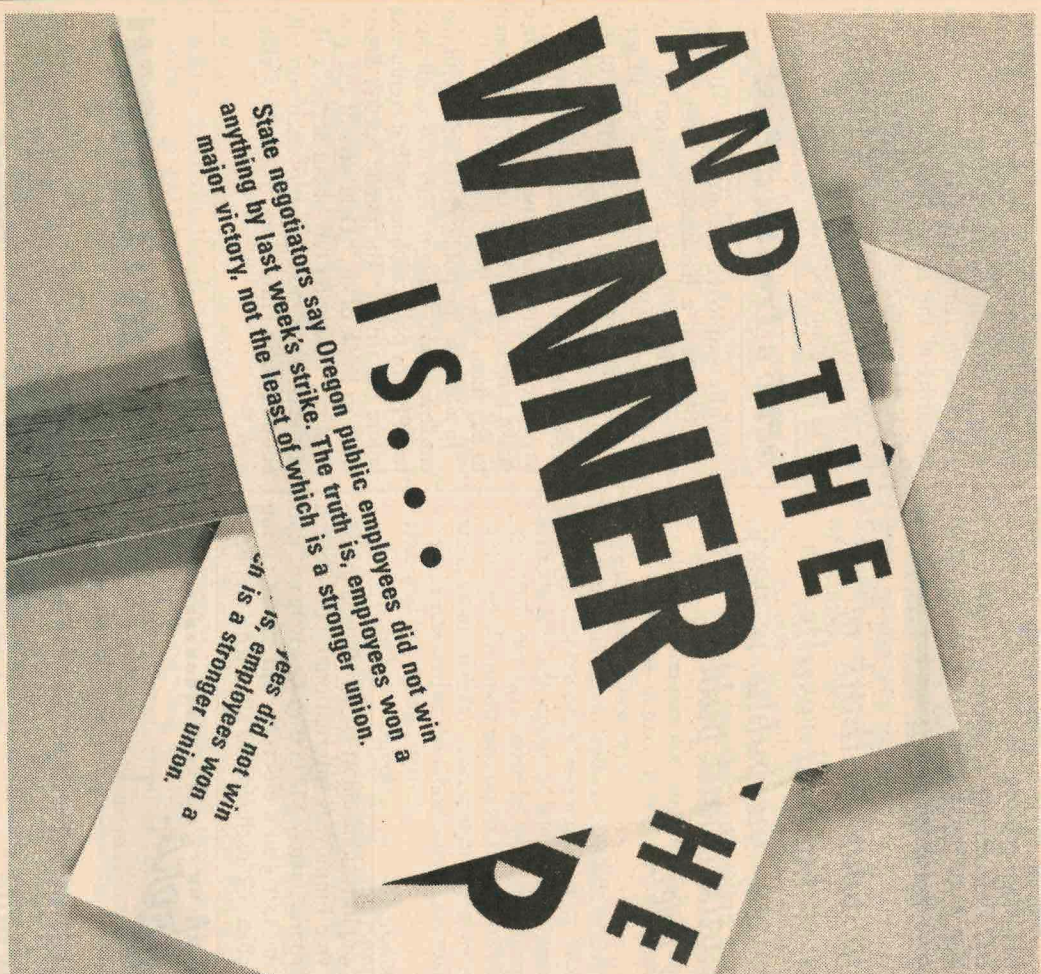
to run until June 30, 1989. "I'm very pleased with the way the strike went," Dale said the day after the settlement was announced. "And, by and large, our members are ecstatic about the settlement."

At first glance, Dale's statements seem hopelessly naive. To outsiders, the strike appeared halfhearted, at best. It did not shut down state government, but merely closed a number of agencies and offices for a few days. At the peak

of the strike, only a little more than a third of the employees represented by the union were off the job.

And the settlement did not appear to be anything to cheer about, either. The state did not budge on the most widely publicized issue: the amount of money to be spent on general pay raises. The union will receive approximately \$8 million in state general-fund dollars for across-

Please turn to page 11



Continued from 1
the-board raises, exactly the amount set aside by the 1987 Legislature for that purpose.

Dale claims the strike forced the state to give the union members an additional \$2.9 million in general-fund dollars for selective salary and benefit increases. But on Friday, state Executive Department Director Fred Miller said the additional money was available to the union all the time. "That kind of settle-

ment was available the day before the strike," Miller repeated on Monday. "Although it was not formally on the table, it had been conveyed in informal ways to the union."

So what is Dale trying to prove? Is she trying to trick the members of her union, who are now voting on whether or not to accept the settlement, into believing the union won more at the bargaining table than it actually



Union strikers: Demanding money and respect

did?

In fact, Dale has every reason to be pleased. Her union won a major victory when it settled the strike last Thursday. The size of the victory cannot be measured by the terms of the settlement alone. The victory is best judged in terms of the evolution of the union itself. After spending the last 44 years on the sidelines, the Oregon Public Employees Union has finally emerged as a force to be reckoned

with.

Still, Miller's comments — which were originally reported on the front page of *The Oregonian's* Metro/Northwest section — bother Dale. If the union members believe the state did not budge during the negotiations, they may reject the settlement. "It's real unfortunate Miller said that," Dale says. "If the state was willing to spend [the additional

Please turn to page 12

LABOR



Continued from 11

money] before the strike, they never said that. If they had the money and didn't put it on the table, our members have every reason to believe they are jerks."

It was not necessary to take sides to find the state employees' strike fascinating. For starters, it was the first multi-agency strike by state employees at Oregon history. Small groups of employees at various state institutions have walked off the job in the past, but this was the first time that members throughout an entire union had hit the picket lines. No one knew what would happen when the strike began.

For the union, the risks were enormous. Dale has been OPEU director for little more than two years. Although she had served as the union's chief negotiator in the past, this

"The public doesn't know what to think of us,"
[union director] Dale says of the poll results.
"When you talk about services, the public is very supportive. But when you talk about public employees, their eyes glaze over."

And the strike occurred during Gov. Neil Goldschmidt's first year in office. A Democrat, Goldschmidt is generally considered to be a friend of organized labor. In fact, OPEU

was the first time she was calling all of the shots. Even many other labor leaders wondered whether the union's leadership and members knew what they were doing when the strike began.

and its nationwide AFL-CIO affiliate, the Service Employees International, contributed approximately \$17,000 to Goldschmidt during last year's election. But, since taking office, Goldschmidt has alienated a number of

his campaign supporters. He has offended some black and Hispanic leaders by not consulting them on key appointments. And he angered some female political activists by not appearing at the recent National Women's Political Caucus convention in Portland. As the strike began, many political observers wondered whether Goldschmidt would stand up to the union and risk breaking it.

OPEU's Troubled Past

Public-employee unions enter all labor negotiations at a disadvantage. There is little they can do to force a settlement by economically hurting management. After all, government does not have to make a profit to stay in business. "It's the old joke that management tells about public-employee unions," says one longtime labor negotiator. "If they strike long enough, we'll save enough money to pay them what they want."

In addition, the public rarely sides with the employees who serve it. This was confirmed to OPEU by public-opinion polls it conducted before the strike. "The public doesn't know what to think of us," Dale says of the poll results. "When you talk about services, the public is very supportive. But when you talk about public employees, their eyes glaze over."

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But OPEU faced more problems than most other public-employee unions when it entered this year's negotiations. Put simply, the union has been regarded as something of a joke since it was founded 44 years ago.

OPEU currently represents nearly 16,500 employees in 45 agencies, including the state's major social-service departments. Many of the employees represented by the union hold the lowest-paying jobs in state government, such as the position of clerical assistant, which begins at \$862 a month, before taxes. The average OPEU employee, however, earns \$1,514 a month, before taxes. In addition, the state pays \$158 a month for full medical and dental coverage for each employee. But when the organization began, it was not overly concerned with wages and benefits.

OPEU's roots go back to 1943, when a number of state employees founded the Oregon State Employees Association. Many of the founders and officers were administrators and college employees. They did not start the organization to improve the lot of all state employees. They were more concerned about advancing their own careers.

In 1973, the Oregon Legislature authorized public employees to bargain collectively over their working conditions, including wages and benefits. Since then, the organization has been seen as ineffective. It twice threatened to strike — in 1975 and 1983 — but backed down both times. In addition, it has been plagued by high staff turnover. Mort Shaprio,

a former Southern labor organizer hired as director in 1975, resigned in 1980 after being convicted of mail fraud following a union election. He was replaced by Tom Gallagher, who quit in June 1985. Some say that Gallagher tried to exert too much control over the union's membership, which was growing increasingly restless.

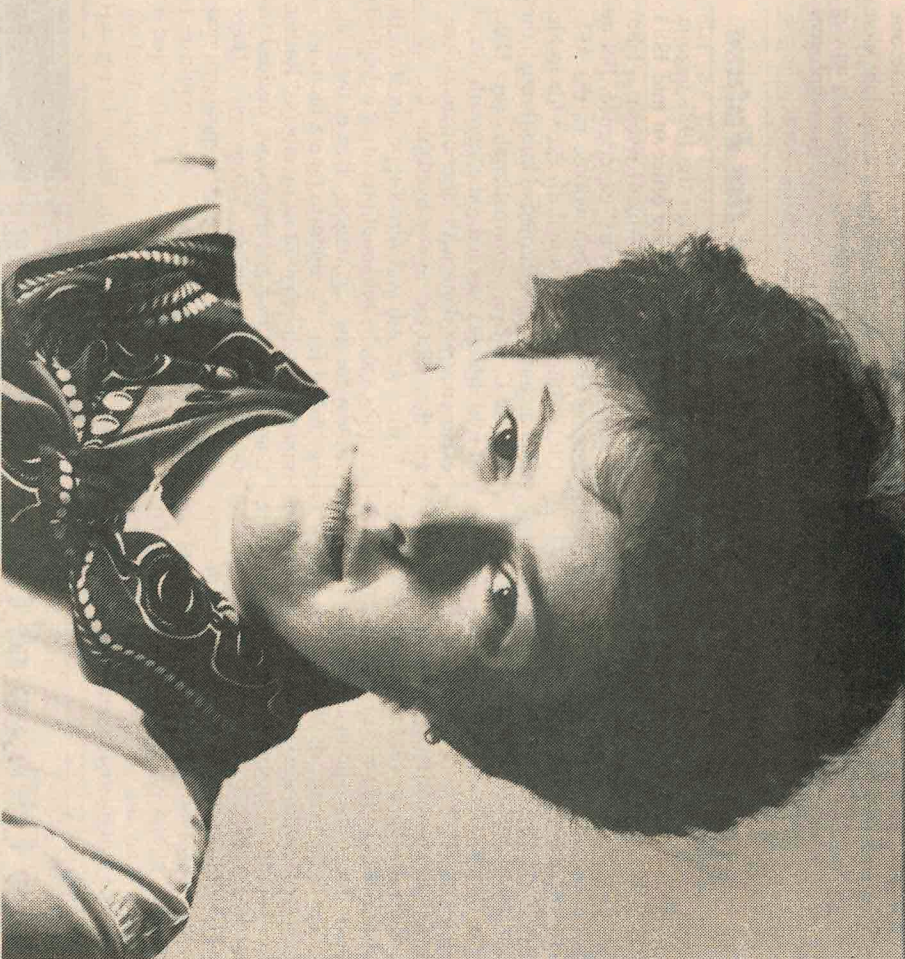
Dale was hired as director in July 1985. She had first gone to work for the union in 1978 and had served as its chief bargainer in 1981 and 1983. A lawyer, Dale went into private practice in late 1983. When she was rehired by the union as director, she knew the problems facing the union. "It was a beleaguered organization," Dale says.

Even other labor leaders had little respect for OPEU or the employees it represents. That attitude was still apparent when the Oregon AFL-CIO met in Seaside in late September. Although the union was on strike against the state, Goldschmidt's representative was more warmly received at the labor convention than Dale and her representatives.

Goldschmidt canceled a scheduled appearance before the convention after OPEU members threatened to picket him. In his place, Goldschmidt sent former state Sen. Ted Kulongoski, the director of the newly formed state Department of Finance and Insurance. When Kulongoski appeared before the delegates, he received two thunderous and prolonged standing ovations. In contrast, when OPEU member Bill Street appeared

Please turn to page 14

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT



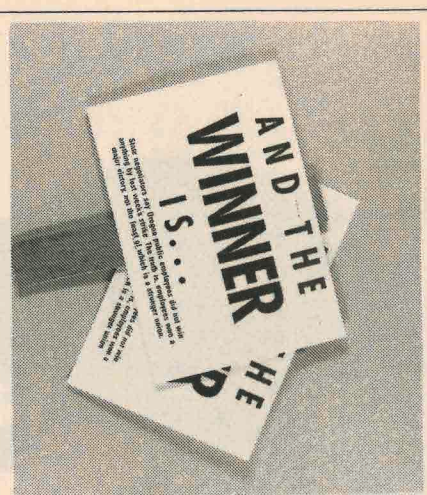
Union director Alice Dale: A big winner in the public employee strike

LISA STONE

Oregon's

Evening the

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ted to public employees under state and federal laws. And while many union jobs were lost in the last recession — especially among lumber workers — most OPEU employees merely had to endure a wage freeze.

Planning for the Future

Dale began planning for the 1987 negotiations shortly after taking office in mid-1985. She started by hiring Mike Krivosh, a labor organizer with 14 years' experience. Before joining OPEU, Krivosh worked as the AFL-CIO's Southern regional director for industrial organizing. "I learned of him through the Service Employees International," says Dale. "I told them we needed someone with lots of experience working with large organizations, and they told me he was available."

After Krivosh was hired approximately 18 months ago, he set about preparing a detailed strategy for the negotiations. Part of the strategy called for the union to take a more militant stance on behalf of its members. "Rather than simply filing grievances, we decided to take more direct actions," Dale says. "There was a ward at Oregon State Hospital that was so understaffed the employees could not schedule vacations. We could have filed a grievance under the contract, but instead we took 12 employees into the hospital's person-

nel office and demanded that two new employees be hired. [Hospital administrators] agreed to do so by the end of the day."

The union also aggressively recruited new

There is no doubt that the strike created a sense of unity within the union that was lacking in previous years.

are considered to be more committed. They pay more to be able to participate in union activities. When Dale was hired as director, only about 9,200 of the approximately 15,700 employees the union represented were members. That number is now up to 11,900, or 72 percent of the 16,500 employees.

Despite this increased support, Dale says she was not sure the employees would strike when negotiations began in March of this year. After all, the employees would lose a day's pay for every day they did not come to work. Although OPEU had access to the large strike fund maintained by its affiliate, the Service Employees International, that money would be available only on an emergency basis. "The hardest part was the uncertainty of knowing how firm the members would be," Dale says.

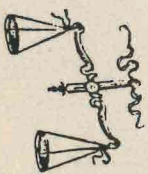
Given the uncertainty, Dale, Krivosh and other union strategists developed a strike plan that minimized each employee's potential wage loss. This was the so-called "rolling strike," a strategy Dale says was inspired by the United Auto Workers. The UAW represents virtually all rank-and-file employees of American Motors, Chrysler, General Motors and Ford. But the union does not strike all assembly plants when negotiations reach an impasse. Instead, the union targets a single manufacturer — Ford or General Motors, for

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example — to demonstrate what can happen across the board if its demands aren't met.

As developed by OPEU, the rolling-strike strategy called for employees from various state agencies to walk out for limited periods of time. That way, Goldschmidt and his negotiators would see that the employees were willing to strike. But no single employee would suffer a serious pay loss.

"We had a tremendous response," says Bentley Gilbert, the union's public-information officer. "For nine days, over 90 percent of our members left their jobs when we asked them to."

Negotiations resumed on Sept. 23. A tentative settlement was reached during an all-night bargaining session. Dale says the strike forced the state to come up with \$2.9 million more in general-fund dollars for the union members. She says the additional money will be spent on selective salary and benefit increases (see sidebar).

Executive Department Director Fred Miller, the head of the state's bargaining team, denies that the strike was effective. He says that before the strike Goldschmidt had authorized the state to spend as much as \$3 million in general-fund dollars for selective salary and benefit increases. And, according to Miller, the union knew that much additional money was available before the strike. "We knew what was possible, and they knew what was available," Miller says. "I was a little perplexed during the strike what their objectives were."

Saving Face?

Dale adamantly disagrees with Miller's assessment of the settlement. She suggests that Miller may have made his statement because he does not want the public to realize the union's tactics were successful. "We

The Fine Print

BOTH SIDES have claimed victory under the proposed settlement. But the Oregon Public Employees Union came out slightly ahead in these major areas:

Across-the-board salary increases: The state's original offer called for a flat 2-percent salary increase during each of the next two fiscal years. The proposed settlement calls for a 2-percent increase in the first year of the contract and a 4-percent increase in the second. The total dollar amount is the same in both proposals — approximately \$8 million — because the second increase will be in effect for only half of the last year.

Achieving a higher ending salary with the same dollars is called "ratcheting." By accomplishing this, the state employees will enter the next negotiating period with higher salaries than under the state's original offer. This is important because ending salaries always become the starting salaries for the state's next budgets. "By accepting this, Goldschmidt is saying we'll let the next session of

didn't know that a cent of [the \$2.9 million] was out there before the strike," Dale says. "[The state's] probably feeling uncomfortable that it looks like the union won something by striking."

In part, the dispute is a matter of semantics. Miller says the union knew that some additional money was "available." Dale says the

the Legislature worry about how to find the money," one longtime political observer says. **Selective salary and benefit increases:** The

state agreed to fund a number of selective salary increases for OPEU employees, including a 14-percent raise for non-guards at the Oregon State Correctional Institution. The state also agreed to a one-time cash bonus of \$70 per employee. And it committed to a \$20-a-month benefit payment for each employee beginning in November 1988.

These payments are expected to cost approximately \$2.9 million in state general-fund dollars. At least some of the selective salary increases were not agreed to before the strike. The money to pay for them must be wrung out of existing agency budgets, and that could cause some problems for Goldschmidt's administration. "Some agencies have a lot of vacancies, which means their budgets are flexible," says one state budget analyst. "But others are a lot tighter, and those could be in real trouble."

state did not put the money "on the table" as formal offers. The truth is somewhere in between. Both sides knew that some money was available in existing agency budgets for other than across-the-board salary increases. But the state did not say how much, and the union felt justified in pushing as hard as

Please turn to page 17

Workload: The proposed settlement agrees to address a growing problem in the state's social-service agencies. Many employees in these agencies are caseworkers, which means they are assigned a number of clients whom they must work with. The agency budgets approved by the Legislature are based on certain ratios between the caseworkers and their clients. But many caseworkers are assigned far more clients than the number envisioned by the Legislature.

This year, the union argued the caseworkers should be paid for each client assigned above the number set forth in the legislatively approved budgets. The state refused, given the potentially enormous costs involved. But the settlement calls for the creation of a committee made up of representatives from management and labor to deal with complaints about excessive workloads. This may not sound like much, but it will give the union a public forum that it has never had before. And given OPEU's growing militancy, it is likely the union will exploit every opportunity to call attention to the demands facing its members.

—J.R.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

A Balanced View

CLOSET CRUNCH?

closet shown is 9'

AS SEEN AT THE STREET OF DREAMS

Designed Space Systems will add valuable space to your closets, pantries, average book shelves



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AND THE WINNER IS...

State negotiators say Oregon public employees did not win anything by last week's strike. The truth is, employees won a major victory, not the least of which is a stronger union.

Fred did not win is, employees won a stronger union.

Continued from 15

possible.

At the same time, Miller's comments have raised questions about how the union will get along with management should the contract be ratified. During the strike, the union sent a flier to all of its members accusing Miller of

lying about the terms of the state's offer. Now Dale says her members wonder if they can trust him in the future. "Fred is just continually putting out this garbage," Dale says.

Of course, by challenging the importance of the strike, Miller is undermining one of the union's major accomplishments. Although

Dale adamantly denies it, some observers believe the union wanted the strike to occur purely for organizational purposes. There is no doubt that the strike created a sense of unity within the union that was lacking in previous years. Employees who never met before became acquainted on the picket lines and at

Many unions have fought long, hard battles to win the rights automatically guaranteed to public employees under state and federal laws. And while many union jobs were lost in the last recession — especially among lumber workers — most OPEU employees merely had to endure a wage freeze.

served as director of the Oregon Department of Transportation. The state's most experienced bargainer was Darlene Livermore, a labor negotiator from Alaska. But she was not hired until June, well after the negotiations had begun to reach an impasse.

During the talks, the state contracted with

the 11 strike headquarters set up around the state. "It helps their stature, in terms of whether they're an association or a union," says Cecil Tibbetts, the Executive director of Council 75 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. "My hat's off to Alice."

Dale blames Miller's statements on inexperience. In fact, almost no one representing the state at the bargaining table had negotiated a union contract before. The state's top three labor negotiators resigned after Goldschmidt took office. Miller had formerly

two Portland lawyers experienced in labor negotiation: Donna Cameron and Louis Livingston of the firm of Miller Nash Wiener Hager & Carlsen. Cameron and Livingston have previously advised school boards during negotiations on teacher salaries. In the end, the lawyers' advice may have benefited the union. According to Kulonogski, the two lawyers repeatedly told the state negotiators about the desirability of returning striking employees to work at the earliest possible time.

Please turn to page 18

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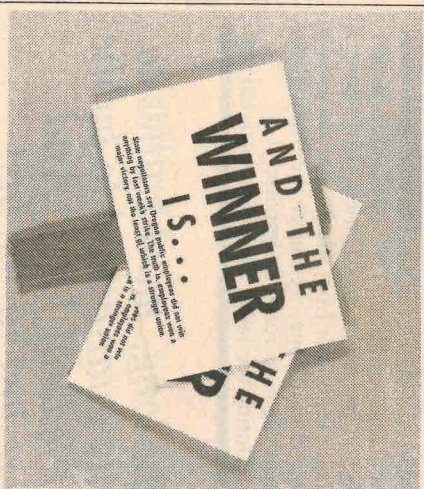
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Continued from 17

On the surface, the big winner in this year's negotiations appears to be Gov. Neil Goldschmidt. He held the line on the state budget and still managed to give the union a contract it could live with, if Dale's assessment is correct and the proposed settlement is accepted. In fact, insiders say Goldschmidt met privately with Dale on at least one occasion to help resolve the stickiest contract issues. Nevertheless, the strike gave at least some segments of organized labor an opportunity to question the governor's support. "Are his true colors beginning to show?" asked union spokesman Gilbert during the strike.

According to a number of Goldschmidt's associates, the governor was deeply disturbed by the strike. "You could tell that it wasn't easy on him," says Portland lawyer Mark Dodson, one of Goldschmidt's longtime friends. "He's buoyed about everything else in the state, but this was not a joyous occasion for him."



The strike gave at least some segments of organized labor an opportunity to question the governor's support.

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STRIKE



ALERT

#5 Justice & Equity

Contract '87



We're On Strike!

Farewell Bend Port of Entry in eastern Oregon distinguished itself today as the first site of picketing when OPEU members struck at midnight, Mountain Standard Time.

One hour later, thousands of OPEU members followed suit, despite the state's last ditch effort to postpone the strike by declaring it illegal.

Reports from around the state indicated that "excessive absenteeism" at worksites targeted by OPEU translated into massive support for the strike. Workers reported for picket duty in high spirits, determined to force the state's hand at the bargaining table.

"Our folks are holding together," said Dave Marsh, Flying Squadron member. "We're backing our bargaining team 100 per cent and we're here on the picket line to prove it," he said.

On Tuesday, September 15th, the state issued a challenge to the strike in a press release and letters distributed to all state workers. But there was no movement at the bargaining table. When negotiations broke off at 4:15 p.m., the union was prepared to strike.

"We have fully complied with our statutory 10-day strike notice," said OPEU Executive Director Alice Dale. "This is only one of many desperate attempts on the part of the State to intimidate our members in order to prevent a strike. It won't work," she said.

Tallies of the OPEU Last Offer Ballot, totalled Tuesday evening, indicated overwhelming rejection of the state's final offer.

OPEU

ON STRIKE

AGAINST STATE OF OREGON

This is the first state worker's strike in Oregon. Our solidarity and strength will win us a contract, and establish our demand that the state negotiate with us. The days of "take it or leave it" contract offers are gone.

Teamsters Sanction Strike

The Teamster Joint Council, representing 11 locals across the state of Oregon, recently extended strike sanctions to OPEU. The sanctions mean that no Teamster member will cross our picket lines during the duration of the strike.

From the Picket Line, OPEU Speaks Out

"I'm striking for seniority. I've been with the state for 10 years. I'm striking for medical benefits. I have a son who was injured and needs extensive medical care. It's a personal decision. But I believe it's also a matter of honor and dignity."

**Bev Underwood, Administrative Assistant
Health Division, Portland**

"In my worksite, I sit right next to the mice. I doubt whether adapting their attitudes would result in a strong contract. I don't see any other way to do it but strike. My family could use the money. And I'd like to buy a house someday."

**Gene Monroe, Lab Technician
Public Health Lab, Portland**

"We have 250 workers in Coos County and 95 per cent of them will strike today. We need to stick with the union. I think a strike will mean more leverage at the bargaining table. Unity is our only answer."

**Jean Pierce, Welfare Assistance Worker
Adult & Family Services, Coos Bay**

"The state has dragged its feet in bargaining and used some dirty tactics. You have to make a stand for what you believe in. We must support the union. If we didn't, we'd still be earning 65 cents per hour and working seven days a week."

**Roberta Jaskar, Medical Center
Eastern Oregon Psych Center, Pendleton**

"Our demands at the bargaining table aren't out of line. I'm tired of broken promises. I'm seeing workers in my workplace quit because of stress and work overloads. And we never receive a pat on the back. Support one another."

**Patty Deer, Vocational Rehab. Counselor
State Office Building, Pendleton**

Legal Corner



Many members have asked questions about the possibility of a lock out of state workers. Charlene Sherwood, General Counsel to OPEU has researched this issue. She believes that a lock out of public employees in Oregon would be completely illegal.

Strike Smarter!

If your worksite was targeted during the first wave of the OPEU strike, don't report to work, report to strike headquarters! Volunteer to make our strike one that will bolster OPEU at the bargaining table:

- Walk the picket line
- Staff phone lines
- Make deliveries
- Do childcare

If your worksite wasn't targeted during the first wave, you can help:

- Distribute Strike Alerts
- Control rumors
- Walk the picket lines before work, during lunch and after work.

Strike Headquarters

Astoria	926 Duane	325-8082
Bend	888 NW Hill	382-2731
Coos Bay	3427 Ash, N. Bend	756-7006
Eugene	99 W. 10th	342-1055
Medford	1133 S. Riverside	779-4324
Newport	606 SW 13th	265-2191
Pendleton	721 SE 3rd	276-4983
Portland	1924 NE Broadway	282-5656
Salem	1310 State St.	371-6524

Statewide, call toll-free: 1-800-452-2146

**For updated information on negotiations,
Call Bargaining Hotline:**

1-800-228-3146

STRIKE

Justice & Equity



ALERT

Contract '87

8/24/87

#1

22 Meetings Vote Strike

From Klamath Falls to Astoria, from Coos Bay to Ontario, OPEU members met, discussed, and voted with a 92% margin to authorize a strike against the State of Oregon. More than five thousand of our members actively participated in deciding to reject the State's inadequate contract offer. The high turnout demonstrated that state workers care deeply about our jobs, while the high spirits of those in attendance demonstrated our will to win a fair contract.

Big Issues Remain Unresolved

The State is unwilling to negotiate on our major issues:

1. Pay. The State offers 2% per year. We demand 3% plus \$25./month per year.
2. Insurance. The State wants to take away fully paid health care.
3. Pay Equity. The State refuses adequate salary ranges to 63 classifications.
4. Job Security. Management wants to protect "the 10% cronies" from lay-off.
5. Workload. They won't discuss their failure to adequately staff state government.

Strike Preparations Advance

The enthusiastic meetings around the state have launched a busy period of strike preparations. We can win a decent contract if we can demonstrate to management that we have the will and the ability to shut down the State. We know that the bureaucrats have been surprised by the Unity Breaks, Work-Ins and other militant worksite actions of recent weeks. While those continue, we must open strike headquarters and fill our strike committees.

Join A Strike Committee

Volunteer to picket or to make picket signs. Sign-up to make phone calls or to make coffee. Talk to workers at other state agencies in your community and in your own worksite. Committee opportunities include: Picketing, Internal Communication, External Communication, Community Outreach, Emergency Services and Hardship. Meetings will be held in worksites to discuss strike structure and committees. Contact your steward or call an OPEU office to volunteer.

(Over for Strike Questions and Answers)

For current information call Bargaining Hotline: 1-800-228-3146

Q & A

Q: Can trial service workers go on strike?

A: YES. All members of OPEU bargaining units can legally participate in the strike. Temporary, management service or unrepresented workers cannot strike and they can be disciplined if they participate in a strike.

Q: Can we be fired for striking?

A: NO. We have a protected legal right to strike under the Public Employees Collective Bargaining Act. We cannot be discriminated against because we exercise our rights. No public employee in Oregon has ever been fired for striking.

Q: Will health insurance continue while we are on strike?

A: Premiums for medical and dental insurance are paid one month in advance, so we will be covered during the month of September. All state agencies have a policy that if you work 80 hours you accrue your insurance benefits for the next month. This is the case if you are on leave without pay. The Union's position, which comes from our legal counsel, is that you are entitled to October insurance.

Q: When can we strike?

A: The contract expires August 31st, but the 30 day cooling off period, which started when the factfinders report was rejected, runs through September 13. We cannot strike until that time and will not strike until the 80 hours is up.

Q: Will the Union pay strike benefits?

A: Not as such, there is less than \$300,000 in a strike defense fund. The Union has a Hardship Committee that will disburse funds in extreme hardship cases.

Q: Will it be a short strike?

A: There is no way to tell how long a strike will last. We should prepare to stay out as long as it takes to win.

Q: Can I take vacation during a strike?

A: That is up to the State; in the past the State has cancelled all vacations after a ten day strike notice has been given.

Q: Are we eligible for unemployment benefits or food stamps while we are out on strike?

A: NO.

Q: Can the State hire replacement workers if we strike?

A: YES. But you could not be permanently replaced. The State announced in 1983 that replacement workers would not be hired. Executive Department Strike Plan in 1987 does not address the question. No contract will be settled without everyone getting their jobs back.

Q: What is my responsibility during a strike?

A: Our basic responsibility is to support each other, and there are many ways to do this. You can volunteer to picket at your worksite, prepare food and coffee for picketers, provide child care, write leaflets, prepare picket signs, answer the phone, etc. Each district and sub-district has committees that you can join.

Q: How can I join a committee?

A: Call the OPEU office nearest you. Leave your name and number. You will be contacted.

Portland: 230-9231; 1-800-527-9374

Salem: 581-1505; 1-800-452-2146

Eugene: 342-1055; 1-800-521-3446

Medford: 779-4324; 1-800-452-7965

Pendleton: 276-4983; 1-800-452-2146

Do you have more questions?

Future issues of "Strike Alert" will feature more questions and answers. Send in your questions:

Strike Alert/OPEU

PO Box 12159

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OPEU ACTIVIST

STRIKING SMARTER FOR JUSTICE & EQUITY IN 1987

By ALICE L. DALE
OPEU Executive Director

After six months of negotiations and very little progress, it's apparent that a statewide strike is a distinct possibility for OPEU members.

That strike possibility increased dramatically when OPEU's bargaining team received a 92% strike authorization vote. The decision to withhold our labor is taken very seriously by OPEU leadership. We are continuing to work for a settlement at the bargaining table. If we must, however, we can and will strike. If we must strike, we want a strike that maximizes our absence from the workplace, but minimizes the financial cost to our members.

Everyone in OPEU's bargaining unit will be involved in the strike. But our involvement will be at different times and for short periods of time.

This strategy makes sense for our members and delivers a good contract. It is a strategy that has an element of surprise, a strategy that the state is unprepared to combat.

Our strategy is unique and on the cutting edge. To develop our strategy, we had a national polling firm survey our membership on both issues and strategy. We met with attorneys from the leading labor law firm on the West Coast. We hired a public relations firm to take our message to the public. We consulted with professionals and called in resources from SEIU. We called public and private sector union locals from other parts of the country. We have fine-tuned and rethought our strike strategy with the input and agreement from the central bargaining team, the Board of Directors and the Strike Coordination Committee.

We believe we have a strike strategy uniquely designed for OPEU; a strike strategy that will work; a strategy that is both effective and legal. Because it will be effective, we expect the state to challenge it at ERB and even in the courts. We are confident, however, that we will win.

A key component of our strategy is the cooperation and commitment of our key activists who built OPEU over the years. We know that you, as always, will rise to meet this challenge.

All workers have an important role in the strike. The secret to the success of the strike, is that we will be involved at different times.

If we must strike, we will use a well-thought-out plan -- striking smarter.

OREGON PUBLIC EMPLOYEES UNION
Justice & Equity '87

OPEU Bargaining Hotline: 1-800-228-3146

A STRATEGIC STRIKE

By KEI QUITEVIS-SMITH, OPEU President
JOHN BICKERS, OPEU Vice President
BILL STREET, OPEU Secretary-Treasurer, and
PETE PETRY, OPEU Past President

Our most potent weapon is the strike.

But, while it stops services, it also stops the sole source of income for most workers. As such, a strike is our strategy of last resort.

That's why our strike strategy is so important. Our goal is to maximize disruption of state services, while minimizing the financial hardship upon the membership.

To simply strike is not enough. We must strike smarter.

Striking smarter means:

- Generating maximum political pressure for settlement.
- Creating optimal economic pressure.
- Devising a strategy based on careful analysis that maximizes our strengths and minimizes our weaknesses.
- Recognizing our goals as justice, equity, dignity and respect.

A general strike is clearly the sentimental favorite. From one perspective, it seems to be easier to prepare for and to administer.

However, it is just as easy for management to plan for and respond to. And, it does not pass the test of duration.

Management is clearly preparing for a general strike. If the Governor forces us out on strike, he does so with full knowledge of the consequences. He is prepared to operate the state with minimal services for as long as it takes. He knows that even the most committed among us have children to feed.

OPEU's strike plan will involve every member of the bargaining unit. But, that involvement will come at different times and for limited periods of time.

To strike strategically and smarter, we must identify the areas of management's greatest vulnerability. For the most part, these areas are ones that will generate the greatest political pressure for settlement. Then, like skilled surgeons, we must dissect the target.

Secondly, we must never underestimate the opponent. The state is strong, but we can undercut its strength by acting unpredictably. We must "out think" management by disrupting where they least expect disruption.

A strategic strike has no end point. After day one, every manager in the state Executive Department must say and think that this activity can go on forever. Unlike a general strike, with total disruption but uncertain duration, a smart strike will force settlement because it causes serious disruption and the end is out of sight. The key is duration.

We can adopt the strategy of European armies standing as clear targets in red coats, on the battlefield, willing to sacrifice thousands of lives for victory. Or, we can be revolutionary Minutemen, willing to respond to the clarion call of our own Paul Reveres on a minute's notice to strike without warning, disappearing into the mist before the injunction is filed, leaving confused and dazed supervisors attempting to assess the damage and jumpy at the prospect of the next work stoppage.

A smarter strategy will work because we know "where the bones are buried." A smarter strategy will create the pressure for settlement while protecting every worker's family resources.
