

**Science in Action:  
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***Science in Action* provides short, timely articles on major issues affecting membership and is released on an as-needed basis. References for additional information are provided at the end of most articles. Science in Action is coordinated with stories and articles that appear in Professionally Speaking, our hard copy newsletter, and our website: [www.wspunion.org](http://www.wspunion.org).**

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2005 – 2007 Contract Checks: When are They Arriving?

You will not have to wait much longer. In what must have been one of the most efficient ends to the contract adoption and signing process, both the Legislature and Governor moved very quickly through all remaining steps in late April and early May. On Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, the Governor signed the WSP contract in the presence of Ken Olson, Donalea Dinsmore, Susan Beyler, Marie Stewart, and Gary Steffen bringing to a close one of the more interesting and successful negotiations in recent years.

Now for the even better news. Recent communications from OSER have given us the following payment schedule: 1) 2005 -2006 pay adjustments (first 2%) were effective on May 14<sup>th</sup>; 2) 2005 - 2006 pay increases will be reflected in our June 8<sup>th</sup> paychecks along with all “lump sum” or back-payments to July 1, 2005; 3) on June 25<sup>th</sup>, the 2006 -2007 pay adjustment (second 2% )goes into effect along with seniority stratification or market money depending on your classification; 4) our July 20<sup>th</sup> paychecks will reflect these increases, and 5) our final pay increase (2.25%) will occur on April 1, 2007. Keep in mind that timely check cutting is contingent on successful reprogramming of DOA computers. Should any significant delays be encountered, we will inform you through “Science in Action”.

The above good news is partially offset by some increases in health insurance payments starting January 2007. Tier I, II, and III- single plans go up \$7, \$10, and \$43, respectively, while Tier I, II, and III- family plans go up \$13, \$25, and \$108, respectively. However, Science was able to add 1.25% to the final 1% slated for April 1, 2007 to help offset these increases.

2005 – 2007 bargaining was one of our more successful endeavors in recent years. Science wants to thank the following individuals for their dedication and assistance: Bargaining Team- Ken Olson, Chair; Kelly O’Neil; Bill Wells; Susan Beyler; and Lisa Treffinger. Support Team- Donalea Dinsmore, Gary Steffen, Eileen Kramer, Andy Alles, Chiara Wuensch, and Marie Stewart. Please be sure to thank these individuals when you see them.

**REMINDER:** Please keep in mind that pay increases combined with lump sum payments can bring about unexpected tax obligations for 2006. Take a look at your withholding situation and make sure you will not fall victim to some bad news next year! Keep the news good!

2006 Convention and Election Update: New Leadership for Changing Times

On Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, Science held its annual convention at the Pyle Center in Madison. Considerable business was conducted at the conference, including 2006 – 2007 budget approval, votes on proposed constitution by-law changes, review of past year activities, and, of course, the election of new officers. Several of these stories will be covered in future editions of “Science in Action” and “Professionally Speaking”.

Of particular significance were the biennial officer elections. Elected to office were Gary Steffen, President; Lisa Treffinger, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP; Sara Schreiber, Membership Secretary; Chiara Wuensch, Recording Secretary; and Brooke Ludwig, Treasurer. Roger Springman agreed to continue as 1<sup>st</sup> VP for a short period of time. Congratulations! All organizations need effective leadership to bring forth new ideas for change and sustained growth. We look forward to seeing their ideas and energy in action over the coming two years. Should you have questions or concerns for the new leadership, contact Gary Steffen at [president@wspunion.org](mailto:president@wspunion.org) or any other officers listed above.

Two officers who gave much to WSP over the past years will be stepping back (only for the short term we hope): Donalea Dinsmore, past President, and Alfredo Sotomayor, past Recording Secretary. These are challenging times to be a public employee and we want to thank them for taking time out of their busy lives to make a difference for their fellow Science Professionals. Congratulations on a job well done!

#### Tax Payer Protection Act Defeat: A Win for Citizens and Public Employees

Good work! The Legislature got the message! The Tax Payer Protection Act aka “TABOR lite” was turned back in the final week of the last legislative session and that was due in no small part to the thousands of e-mails and phone messages received by legislators. Make no mistake: orchestrated campaigns can make a difference. We may need your help again in the next legislative session, so be alert to opportunities as they arise.

#### Low-Cost Health Care Plan Announced by AFL-CIO

Rising health care costs combined with poor system controls has allowed health care to become unaffordable for thousands of citizens, families, and businesses in Wisconsin. One of our Union affiliates, the AFL-CIO, has not only been thinking about this crisis, they have done something about it. Over the past two years they have worked long and hard with a broad coalition of groups and businesses to see what else can be done to bring about change. What they have come up with is a “Wisconsin Health Care Partnership Plan” . . . an absolutely fascinating, low-cost plan which could make Wisconsin the envy of the nation. A bill enabling this new plan will be introduced during the next legislative session. To see what this plan contains, go to [www.wisafclcio.org](http://www.wisafclcio.org).

#### PTAWEB: Problems and Concerns are Emerging

Over the past 18 months, the DOA has been requiring agencies to begin implementing an electronic time and payroll record system called PTAWEB. PTAWEB is an Oracle software program designed for office environments. Guess what? When applied to complex agency settings with both FLSA-exempt and non-exempt staff along with people with complex field and office schedules, problems arise. This is what has been happening at Commerce, Revenue, and Agriculture in recent weeks to name but a few. DNR is using a wholly different system which is much more user-friendly for Science Professionals.

WSP is aware of increasing problems and has been receiving complaints. If you have had ANY time or payroll problems as a result of PTAWEB implementation, you should contact Roger Springman at 608-224-4545 immediately. It can be ANY problem with PTAWEB, (e.g. time denied, confusion over Professional Time and Compensatory Time coding or banking, check delays, supervisors changing pay or time codes, poor instruction).

#### Update on Lakeland Times Lawsuit

As reported several months ago, Science is working in parallel with the DNR to protect the privacy rights of state employees covered by bargaining contracts. The DNR is providing statutorily-directed information, but believes it is bound by Science Professional and other contracts to withhold certain other information. This legal position was called into question by the Lakeland Times who insisted that they had a right to receive a much broader array of personnel information on DNR staff in the greater Rhineland area.

WSP with the assistance of our legal counsel, Tim Hawks of Hawks, Quindel, Ehlke & Perry, S.C., a summary judgment request was filed several months ago with Circuit Court Judge Foust, Dane County. Briefs were filed and a ruling is expected within the next six weeks. Science is hopeful that the judge not only understands the public vs. private issues at stake in this case, but accepts the belief that contracted agreements on privacy protection mean something.