



New officers of Local No. 64 of the Laborers International Union are Bobbie Bell, Bobbie Glenn, William David Perry, Jerry Biers, Wadel Johnson and Charlie Cross. Representing the International Union are B.L. Liverman, District Council, Connie Ellis, organizer, and Jack Wilkinson, Regional Manager. Officers not pictured are Dean Parris, Joel Bennett, Lawrence Avery, Robert Thompson, Andrew Shropshire. (photo by Eileen Hanson)

City Workers Install 11 New

Officers Of Local Union 64

by Eileen Hanson
Special to the Post

City workers took another step towards union organization on Friday, April 6 with the installation of 11 new officers of Local Nbr. 64 of the Laborers International Union.

The installation, held at the AFL-CIO Labor Building, 2121 Commonwealth, was attended by 100 city workers.

The officers, appointed to run the new Local during its first year, are: Dean Parris, president; Bobby Bell, vice president; Joel Bennet, recording secretary; Jerry Biers, secretary-treasurer; Wadel Johnson, business manager; Lawrence Avery, sergeant at arms; William David Perry, Andrew Shropshire and Robert Thompson, auditors; Charles Cross and Bobbie Gleen, executive committee members.

Jack Wilkinson, Regional Manager for the Laborers Union, installed the new officers. He criticized N.C. law which prohibits city governments from signing labor contracts with their employees.

"We think the law is unconstitutional, but we need muscle to force the issue of repeal," said Wilkinson. He referred to efforts to organize city workers in Winston-Salem (Teamsters Union); and Raleigh (Operating engineers Union). "We are all working very closely together on this."

Wilkinson said Charlotte, Durham, Greensboro, Raleigh and Winston-Salem were the key N.C. cities to organize. "We need people behind a

movement to get rid of this law," said Wilkinson.

Even without a contract the union can represent the employees in discussions of wages, benefits and grievances.

Organizer Connie Ellis pointed to a recently resolved grievance of sanitation department employee Clark Mungo.

Mungo was fired February 19 for refusing to ride a sanitation truck which he said had a driver who couldn't operate the truck safely in ice and snow.

The union hired Chambers law firm to represent the employee at the grievance hearing with the City. The employee won his job back and a month's back wages, minus a 3-day suspension.

"This is just one example of how a union can help city workers," said Ellis.

The union wants to represent 1,000 blue collar city workers in 11 departments. The union claims to be near its goal of having 80 percent of the workers sign union cards.

"But it doesn't cost anything to sign a card," said Ellis.

"We must show the City we have dues-paying members and that we mean business." The union has already started to collect \$7.00 monthly union dues.

According to James Deese, a sanitation worker for the past 6 years, the main issues are work rules, better insurance coverage and wages.

"If you're out one day you have to bring a doctor's state-

ment," said Deese referring to the city's sick-leave policy. "Who can afford to go to the doctor with every illness?"

For Robert Audry, an employee for 9 years in the sanitation department, the main issue is representation. "Now you're out there alone, with no one to help you. With a union we'll have representation," he said.

But according to Ellis, "the bottom line is always power - green power," referring to the wage issue. The workers complain that they are paid less than employees in other cities of comparable size to Charlotte.

Mecklenburg

County Road

To Close

The Division of Highways of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) will close Old Dowd Road (Secondary Road 1191) in Mecklenburg County to through traffic for approximately six months, according to Division Engineer David B. Roberts.

The road, located between Wilkinson Boulevard (US 29-74) and Harlee Avenue in Charlotte, will be closed from Thursday, April 12 to Thursday, October 18.

The road will be closed during construction of the Charlotte Inner Loop.

Traffic will be detoured on Wilkinson Boulevard and Harlee Avenue.

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