

# **Smashing Success!**

## **Give a Day for Healthcare and Pay**

Nearly 500 union members from all four unions representing workers at EBMUD gave a day to demonstrate in support of saving their healthcare benefits and in support of fair pay on Tuesday, May 8. Starting at 6:00 a.m. informational picketing occurred at over eleven District facilities before moving to a rally at District headquarters.

At 11:00 a.m. a raucous crowd of empowered union members filled 11<sup>th</sup> Street from Franklin to Webster in front of EBMUD headquarters in downtown Oakland. At one point over 400 members paraded up and down chanting slogans in time with a big bass drum. Employees from the SD1 waster water treatment plant, Adeline Maintenance Center, District headquarters, all maintenance yards and “up country” facilities were represented. Local 21 Supervisors, Senior Engineers and Superintendents marched in solidarity with white collar, blue collar and technical workers in support of one another.

At 1:00 p.m. the crowd completely filled the Board of Directors chamber and spilled out into the hallway. There were at least 50 union members unable to sit and had to stand in the room. Some 60 union members filled the outside hallway. The audience included District employees of all levels, members of other labor unions from the central labor councils, District retirees and family members. All were there to say “no” to benefit cuts and “yes” to fair pay increases.

Union Presidents Pat Hendl, Mark Foley, Reggie Moore and Jeff Cloherty urged the Directors to again make EBMUD “The Employer of Choice.” Sharon Cornu, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Alameda Central Labor Council, and Pam Aguilar, Executive Director of the Contra Costa Central Labor Council, both urged the Board of Directors to not go down the path of turning EBMUD into the Wal-Mart of public utilities. Individual members and retirees spoke eloquently in urging the District to reject cuts to healthcare and two-tiered retiree medical benefits.

## **Board rejects SD1 contracting out**

In a surprise victory, SD1 union members convinced the Board to reject a proposed lease agreement with Worldwide Waste Management. In a unanimous vote, they rejected a proposed deal that would have seen a private-for-profit firm build a 9,000 square foot building on District property at SD1 that would have had private employees at substandard wages pre-treat trucked in sludge that would then be pumped through our plant.

## **No movement seen at the bargaining table**

Despite the success on Tuesday at our union rallies, we saw no movement from the District in bargaining the next day. Our Local 21 negotiating team was scheduled to

receive a response to our counter proposal on benefits and salaries and to finally receive a response to our salary equity proposals submitted four weeks ago. After waiting two hours from the scheduled start of negotiations, we were told that there would be no response at all that day. We're not sure whether they were giving us a message that they would not budge without more pressure, or whether they needed time to recalculate their position given the massive union turnout the day before.

## **Keep The Pressure On**

On Tuesday morning, May 15, the leadership of all District unions will be meeting to discuss what steps we will take to ratchet-up the pressure on the District. The next District Board of Directors meeting is not scheduled until May 22. We expect plans will be announced next week regarding future job actions. Evidently, more pressure than having 500 workers on the street and filling the Board Chambers will be needed to save our healthcare benefits and win a decent contract settlement. Our next bargaining session occurs on Wednesday, May 16 and we feel we must have movement then or we need to consider more serious work actions. Stay tuned here for more information.