

# OYA *In the Loop*

February 27, 2009

## **First Open Forum Well Received**

I would like to thank the 80 or so employees who attended our first open forum this morning. Central Office, Clackamas, Jackson, Bend, Hillcrest and Oak Creek were represented.

I gave a brief introduction and review of the situation as we see it today. This is no different than the information I shared with you on the video message yesterday, so I am not going to repeat it here.

Here are most of the questions and answers (edited for brevity, clarity and accuracy!):

Q: What impacts will various state and federal stimulus packages have on employment?

A: We don't know. It is wait and see if the banks start loaning and businesses start hiring.

Q: Has any consideration been given to changing the work week to four ten-hour days?

A: We haven't talked specifically about that. Several weeks ago, though, we asked DAS about moving forward with some cost saving measures for our own agency and we were told "no" – except for layoffs. DAS wants the state to act as one on issues like furloughs, office closures and pay reductions.

Oh, and at today's public safety directors' meeting, there was some discussion about asking DAS to consider incentives for retirement.

Q: If an employee wants, can they take their furlough days together or do they have to be spread out?

A: There are two different furlough discussions for this biennium: management and represented. Nothing has been signed on behalf of represented staff, so this information applies only to management.

Here's what you can do, working with your supervisor: You can bunch your days up, take one on a holiday (there's only one holiday left this biennium – Memorial Day), you can take them here and there or you can elect the salary reduction equivalent. What you can't do: Partial days, work on a furlough day, or exceed 40 hours in a week of work + furlough.

No decisions have been made about next biennium, but I did read that management furloughs will match or exceed any taken by represented staff.

Q: Are layoffs and bumping rights done by region?

A: Yes. With lots of caveats and fine print that won't fit in an In the Loop, facilities regions for layoff purposes are: Central/Eastern Oregon Region: Eastern Oregon and RiverBend; South Valley and Southern Oregon (combined for layoff purposes but not for recall purposes): Oak Creek, Corvallis House, Rogue Valley and Camp Florence; Western Oregon: Camp Tillamook, Tillamook YCF and North Coast; and North Valley: Hillcrest and MacLaren.

There are no bumping rights across associations.

Q: Are there going to be office closures?

A: DAS wants to make a statewide decision on that. If so, that would be next biennium.

Q: What is the status of the director recruitment and will it have any effect on this process?

A: We had two finalists about ten days ago. We haven't heard anything more. My guess is that the Governor's Office is considering a Plan B, so for now you are stuck with me.

Q: Will performance count in layoff decisions?

A: For represented staff, we will follow the letter of the contracts. Management staff's performance reviews are being completed, and they could factor into decisions.

Q: We need a suggestion box from which we can receive an answer.

A: You have one: [oyaintheloop@oya.state.or.us](mailto:oyaintheloop@oya.state.or.us). Mind you, we had hundreds of emails about closing Burns so I can't promise you even a form letter in that case. We did reply to most from the community, however.

Q: Is that where we should submit money-saving ideas?

A: I love money-saving ideas and they are welcome, particularly those that make us more effective and produce a better service. I have long been an advocate of listening to the people doing the work. There is a lot to be said of the cumulative impact of a lot of small savings; for the Legislature, however, we need to find those that have a large-impact.

Q: How will cuts to Central Office be decided?

A: I'm still working on that. What happens too often is that people on the front line are cut and administration is not. I'm not going to look in any one place. Also, performance matters. I asked supervisors what parts of Central are helpful and what parts are not.

Q: What did they say?

A: No one got back to me.

Q: Is there any discussion of not spending money on illegal aliens?

A: That's a legal issue over which we have no power. However, Oregonians expect accountability, no matter a person's nationality.

Q: Can you talk about salary freezes?

A: Contract negotiations will determine the impact on represented staffs' salaries. Management reductions and freezes include eliminating Step 10, rolling back raises and furlough days.

Q: SEIU contacts its members via e-mail. AFSCME doesn't or isn't able.

A: Using the state email system was bargained and the ability is in both unions' contracts. However, there are lots of restrictions. For instance, the state email can't be used for interactive communication – only for sharing information with members. There are even parameters around that and the union management is aware of those.

Q: Is Central Office staff eligible to bump within the region?

A: Yes, and vice versa.

Q: In the introduction today and in your video you suggested we work with legislators and others to tell them about our agency and our good work. Can you tell us what specifically we can do?

A: Invite them in, talk to them. It doesn't have to be legislators -- talk to everyone and let them know that we are an essential piece of the public safety pie. I worry sometimes that we are overshadowed by the sheer size of DOC and the State Police. Be careful, though, not to lobby which means don't ask them to vote a certain way. The more people know about what we do, the more they'll speak up to decision makers.

Q: What about replacement cars?

A: All car orders are on hold. We have to keep the ones we have running until at least the next biennium.

Q: If we think we may be laid off, what resources are there for us?

A: We will do everything within our power to provide information, resources, placement with other agencies – anything to minimize the impact. As an agency, we need to take care of one another. We have resources listed on the OYA Employee Resources section of our Web site, and we'll enhance those as we learn of more useful resources.

Q: Are rotations going to be retracted?

A: No news on that yet.

Q: Are you moving forward with management training?

A: Against my better judgment, no – management training has been postponed. Let me tell you a bit about why this was a painful decision. It is important that managers are all on the same page, hear the same things, and that they embrace, share and role model our organizational values. Well-running operations provide consistent training to managers so that staff are treated fairly and uniformly. I am hopeful we can continue the training next biennium.

Fariborz: What else can we do to be helpful? Please let us know in person or by email.