

March 30, 2011

Dear Fellow El Rio Union Members and Employees:

We are living in some tough times right now. Legislation at the state and federal levels threaten funding that El Rio counts on to operate. A proposal to remove 280,000 childless adults from the state AHCCCS program would have a disastrous effect on funding at El Rio. However, those of us who are lucky enough to work at El Rio have a benefit other health centers and hospitals in Tucson do not – a union who advocates for them!

The Union has met with Administration regarding these potential budget shortfalls and at this time there will be no wage or benefit cuts and no layoffs. Management salaries have been frozen and El Rio is soliciting suggestions for cost saving methods. The union has suggested that a large cost saver would be the elimination of the Random Urine Drug Testing Program. We want to assure El Rio employees that we are here and that we are fighting to protect your job!

Strength comes in numbers. The more members we have the stronger we are and the more clout we have with Administration. As we head into these dark times, your membership is more important than ever before. If you have not yet joined the union, I invite you to join. If you are already a member, I urge you to become active. WE NEED YOU!

You may reach me at (520) 982-0951 or jenkins427@hotmail.com, Maria Velasco, Vice-Chair, at (520) 370-8483 or mariav@elrio.org, or John Duran, Chief Steward at (520) 559-9277 or duran_926@msn.com. We are in the process of bringing our website up to speed, afscme449.org. We would love to get your comments on issues you would like to see addressed by the union and we hope to start a discussion forum on the website and use it to clarify the union stance on current issues.

I would like to invite you to participate in a local rally and Barbeque on April 4, 2011, next Monday. It is at Veinte de Agosto Park (Pancho Villa Park) at Broadway Blvd and Church Avenue. It starts at 4 p.m. At 5 p.m. there will be a march to Armory Park. This is a family event, organized by the Pima Area Labor Federation (to which AFSCME 449 belongs.) This is a great way to come and meet other union members and get involved in the labor movement called, "We Are One," inspired by the recent attacks on union workers in Wisconsin.

Remember, we are only as strong as our members, which means we need you to become active and involved. Join us to protect our jobs, improve our workplace, and work toward the way of life unions have always fought for!

In Solidarity,

Janet L. Valencia, Chair
El Rio Division
AFSCME Local 449