



Left: In attendance at the signing ceremony were Governor Christine Gregoire who signed the bills into law along with (standing from right to left) Seattle Branch Agent Jon Anderson, MEBA Legislative Rep. Gordon Baxter, Seattle Patrolman Karol Kingery, and WSF Rep. Jeff Duncan.



Left: Seattle Branch Agent Jon Anderson discussed particulars of the new contract with members aboard the WSF vessel M/V CATHLAMET. Left to right are Bill Boyce (C/F), Ralph Blasing (Oiler), Jon Anderson (Seattle Agent) and Sam Freeman (A/E).

# WSF Upgrade

## Seattle Law Signings Deliver MEBA Trifecta

On March 21, Washington State Governor Christine Gregoire signed into law three MEBA supported bills that provide substantial benefits to members who crew the Washington State Ferry system. The law changes are also significant victories for all affected maritime unions of the Great Northwest's Puget Sound Area. Gov. Gregoire said, "It is with great pride that I am signing this historic law to improve the ferry workers' ability to improve their contracts for themselves and their families."

The first of the three, the "Collective Bargaining Dateline Change" puts the Washington State Ferry labor unions ahead of the budgeting process, so that new money can be brought into their contracts before the budget is set. The old system which put our members behind the budget only allowed sporadic cost-of-living-adjustments over the last 25 years.

The second change is the "Passenger Only Ferries Protection" law that prevents privatization by allowing only State counties to enter into the Ferry business and requires Union contracts remain intact.

The third is termed the "Political Action Contributions to Unions for all State Employees by way of Payroll Check Deductions" law.

MEBA President Ron Davis and Executive V.P. Bud Jacque were onboard early in support of Seattle Branch Agent Jon Anderson's approach to improving MEBA/WSF contracts through the political process. Davis previewed the legislative effort as the headline speaker before the 2005 Washington State Labor Convention and won praise for the plan from the union body in attendance.

Brother Anderson noted, "I am very thankful for all of the support I've received from President Davis. I am also especially appreciative of the groundwork laid by EVP Bud Jacque and Gulf Coast VP John McCurdy, both who previously served as Seattle Branch Agents. This legislative win was the result of union solidarity and cooperation with Washington State officials. It represented a year of hard work from a large group of dedicated people. It was a challenge, but I'm proud to say we got it done."

Secretary-Treasurer Cecil McIntyre provided assistance to the Seattle office that worked on this bill, which is essential for the new era of union political activism required to secure new monies for contracts through legislative budget appropriations and continued leadership in Olympia, Washington.

MEBA WA State Legislative Rep. Gordon Baxter and Lawyer Mike McCarthy were also vital to the process. The solidarity of thirteen labor unions, Labor/Mgt. (WSF) workshops, and critical assistance by Peter Bogdonoff of the Office of Financial Management with Steve McLain of the Labor Relations Office helped negotiate the needed bill language for the Governor's office to support this law change.

Members should begin feeling the beneficial effects of the new law changes when our Seattle representation gets set to negotiate the next 2007-2009 WSF contract. WSF mariners just finalized a pair of contracts (combined into one) covering the years 2003-07. Members ratified a counter-offer from the State two weeks after overwhelmingly rejecting an earlier tender. The wage package that passed by a four to one margin contains \$5 million dollars in raises – the best deal in decades. It includes a 21.4% increase for assistant engineers and the first-ever MEBA contracted holiday honoring past MEBA President Jesse Calhoun's birthday on April 4th.

"These political changes are creating an atmosphere for better bargaining," Anderson stated. The Seattle Agent was thankful to his negotiating team that included Seattle Patrolman Karol Kingery, WSF Rep. Jeff Duncan and WSF Members Bruce Cooper, Mike LaCroix, Nate Ratcliff, Beth LeBlanc, Dave Jameson, Steve Walker, Mario Micomonaco, Ray Twitty, Jim Saunders, Dan Delaney, Shane Kelley, Courtney Lamm, Don Feldman, Bill Schweyen, and Mark Nitchman. ■