

Turning Crisis into Opportunity

Building Democratic, Fighting Unions Defending Public Services in Hard Economic Times



Special Opening Plenary:

Understanding the Crisis, Fighting the Cuts: The Stakes for Vermont Workers

with *Labor Notes'* Mark Brenner

**December 5, 1-5 pm
Davis Student Center
UVM, Burlington**

Layoffs. Concessions. Benefit cuts. Corporate America has created the biggest crisis for workers in decades, and we are paying the price.

How do we defend jobs, health care, retirement and public services — already deeply eroded by 30 years of rollbacks and cutbacks? How do we lay the groundwork to fight for more — including livable wages, genuine health care, well-funded schools, strong safety nets and colleges Vermonters can afford?

Agenda highlights:

- ▶ 12:30 pm Registration
- ▶ 1 pm Opening plenary and Q&A with *Labor Notes'* Mark Brenner
- ▶ 2 pm Roundtable on Campaigns that Are Turning Unions Around and Taking on the Challenges
- ▶ 3 pm Break-Out Discussions: Taking on the Challenges in Vermont
- ▶ 4 pm Fightback from Below with United Teachers Los Angeles' Sarah Knopp

Special Pre-Conference Workshops (10 am – noon):

- Involve Your Members & Build A Strong Union
- Lessons for Labor, Past & Present
- Healthcare Is a Human Right - Organizing for Change
- Coming to terms with the FairPoint bankruptcy

Register online at workerscenter.org/conference09

This event is free and open to the public. Voluntary donations to defray costs will be accepted at the door. The conference site is barrier-free. Interpreters are available upon request prior to the conference.

For more information, email <traven_L@earthlink.net> or call (802) 861-4892.

Organized by *Labor Notes*, the Vermont Workers' Center and Vermont labor activists.

Special Pre-Conference Workshops

Involve Your Members & Build A Strong Union

Facilitator: Ellen David Friedman

Unions have no real power without the active participation of members. It may seem hard, but there is no magic to getting members active and involved in your union — just some simple principles and practical steps, done in the right order.

If you are frustrated, worried or just don't know what to do to build up the power of your group, come check out this workshop. We will discuss how you identify possible allies, what you say to get them interested, how to organize effective meetings, preparing for contract campaigns, finding and supporting candidates for union office and more.

Whether your union is small or large, very new or well-seasoned, pretty democratic already or dangerously autocratic, there will be something useful for you in this session.

Lessons for Labor, Past & Present

Join us for a conversation with Steve Early, author of *Embedded with Organized Labor*, & Mark Brenner of *Labor Notes*, hosted by Traven Leyshon.

Healthcare Is a Human Right — Organizing for Change

Around the state, organizing committees of the Vermont Workers' Center have been building the political power needed to win healthcare as a human right. Join us at this workshop to hone your organizing skills and grow this movement for positive change in our state.

Coming to terms with the FairPoint bankruptcy

What can we do? What have we learned? Where are we headed? Plus discussion of other telecom issues, including AT&T wireless, telecom & cable organizing, and next steps towards achieving universal broadband access.

Open discussion and brainstorming session for all FairPoint and AT&T members featuring IBEW Local 2326 Business Manager Mike Spillane and CWA Local 1400 President Don Trementozzi. All friends of labor are welcome.

December 5, 10 am – noon (registration at 9:30 am)
Davis Student Center, UVM, Burlington