



# The Mobilizer



Volume 3, Issue 2

July 2005

## Members at DOL call center fight closure

By BLAIR BURROUGHS

On April 13, 2005, the state Department of Labor (DOL) told PEF Division 245 members they plan to close the New York City Telephone Call Center (TCC). DOL said employees had the option of moving to Endicott or Troy to work, or lose their jobs.

Immediately members of Division 245, a fully mobilized division, sprung into action. PEF statewide labor-management chair for DOL, Frank Besser, with Executive Board members Ronald Goldstein and Council Leader Bernice Jones, met with management to express PEF's concern with the closing and the disruption of the lives of more than 200 members of Division 245.

The L-M team also requested information that became valuable for the fight back campaign. With the guidance of Region 10 Coordinator Jennifer Faucher, members came out in full force for a press conference on the steps of New York City Hall to help launch the TCC fight back campaign and bring the closure fight to the attention of local politicians.

Division 245 members Steward Carlos Suarez and activists Helen Esposito and Evarist Nicholas, started petitioning the public as well as city and state legislators. Within a three-week period, they managed to get more than 10,000



**HUNDREDS RALLY** — PEF members rally in June with other unions and NYC residents at City Hall Park to protest the closure of the state Labor Department's Telephone Call Center.  
— Photo by Bill Sachs

signatures. They attended local street fairs, festivals and stood on busy intersections with petitions in English, Spanish and Chinese, to illustrate how the multilingual TCC staff can serve the diverse NYC population.

Members fanned across New York City and contacted 35 Senators, 65 Assembly members, all 51 city council members and four of the five borough presidents. Two borough presidents offered an alternative space for the New York City TCC and 17 city council members sent a letter to the governor in support of keeping the TCC in Manhattan.

On June 15, members held a rally at City Hall Park where PEF President Roger Benson announced plans to file a racial discrimination lawsuit against the state Labor Department and its

commissioner, Linda Angello. Members also gave testimony on July 8 at a legislative hearing as others demonstrated outside the building. They also reached out to various ethnic communities in New York City that would be adversely affected by the relocation of the TCC.

Members will continue the fight back campaign. For the latest news, visit the PEF Web site at [www.pef.org](http://www.pef.org) and click on the "Don't Hang Up" button or call the PEF Information Line at 1-800-553-2445.

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**STOP PRIVATIZATION** — A thousand PEF members rally at the state Capitol in June to urge lawmakers to pass the PEF "accountability" bills that would curtail the use of contractors. — Photo by Deborah Miles

## Members mobilize, rally to pass “accountability” bills

By **BLAIR BURROUGHS**

In support of PEF’s anti-privatization campaign, the union’s Mobilization and Civil Service Enforcement/Research Departments held 12 “Go Public” legislative forums throughout the state to promote PEF’s accountability legislation. In preparation for the June 8 “Go Public” rally, PEF staff attended 32 membership meetings where the “Go Public” DVD was played and members’ questions about the proposed legislation were answered.

The next step of the “Go Public” campaign culminated in a

rally at the Capitol steps, where hundreds of PEF members mobilized to support the legislation. The sponsors of the bills addressed the PEF members along with the leaders of both the Assembly and Senate.

As of this printing, all of the legislation has passed the Assembly and two bills passed the Senate. They are waiting to be signed or vetoed by the governor.

## Brothers and sisters unite for air quality in NYC

By **BLAIR BURROUGHS**

PEF Division 199 members, with support of other city, state and federal unions from the state Department of Health, participated in a rally at their new work location, 90 Church Street in

Manhattan earlier this year.

This fully mobilized division marched and chanted with members from the National Postal Mail Handlers Union Local 300, CSEA Local 010, AFSCME Local 375, CWA Local 1180, the Organization of Staff Analysts, and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 237.

The event attracted the attention of local news media to the plight of the workers in the 90 Church Street building. The building is adjacent to the former World Trade Center site, which is now a very large and active construction site.

The unions are asking for more security and air quality advancements, as the building is located near the construction area which will contribute to environmental pollution for many years.

..... PLEASE POST AND DISTRIBUTE .....



## **ACTION ALERT**

### ***KEEP THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TELEPHONE CALL CENTER OPEN***

New York State plans to close the New York City Telephone Call Center (TCC) without adequate justification for the closure. *New York City will lose over 250 jobs due to this closure.* The State plans to rely on TCC offices in Troy and Endicott to handle NYC Unemployment Claims. These offices will be unable to recruit adequate numbers of Spanish and Chinese speaking staff. This may violate federal court orders regarding unemployment insurance service to claimants with limited English proficiency.

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#### **TAKE ACTION ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE**

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This closure will result in layoffs as well as geographic transfers uprooting families from their communities. If we are to keep the TCC jobs in NYC we need our state legislators to put pressure on Governor Pataki and his Commissioner of Labor.

**Fax a letter to the Governor  
and his Labor Commissioner.**

Go to *www.pef.org* and click on



**TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

# L-M training sharpens skills for parole officers

Stewards from PEF Division 236, Division of Parole, attended a unique training this spring, which included mobilization, legislative and labor-management training. The two-day training was designed to promote a broad analysis of how to approach problems in agencies that have intransigent grievance processing.

The heart of the training is how to use the labor-

management process in article 24 as a mobilization tool.

Once the L-M team has identified the issues that concern the membership, the union moves these issues forward with legislative

pressure, mobilizing responses, grievance and labor-management procedures.

Union leaders say the goal is to strengthen the membership and administer the contract.

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***“The heart of the training is how to use the L-M process as a mobilization tool.”***

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## RESOURCES

*Stay informed!*

☛ Sign up to receive PEF’s “Active Informed Member (AIM)” e-mail updates. Join the PEF ACTION CENTER by visiting [www.pef.org](http://www.pef.org) and clicking on “Action Center.”

☛ Call the PEF Hotline, updated weekly, at 1-800-553-2445

*If you need information or assistance with the mobilization process contact:*

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