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Sept. 3, 2009

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Labor Day Events Focus on Much-Needed Health Care and Labor Law Reform

New study finds 31 percent of young workers are uninsured

Working families across Illinois and the country will celebrate Labor Day this year by spotlighting their fight for health care reform and passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. At parades and events in Illinois union members will hand out informational flyers on the issues and carry signs calling for Congress to pass both bills this fall.

“Working-class men and women understand that America’s health care system is broken,” said Michael T. Carrigan, president of the Illinois AFL-CIO. “Costs are out of control. Each year Americans are paying more for less coverage. Half of all personal bankruptcies in this country are at least partly the result of medical expenses. Most workers and their families can not afford health insurance unless they are privy to employer-based/employer-paid coverage and employers, especially small businesses, are struggling to provide coverage for their employees. Older and retired workers are frightened of losing their coverage or being discriminated against. But perhaps the most telling reason for health care reform is that 46 million Americans are currently without any coverage.”

To further demonstrate the need for health care reform, the AFL-CIO released on Wednesday a disturbing national survey of 1,156 workers, of which 602 were young workers under the age of 35. The survey found that 31 percent of young workers are uninsured because of high insurance rates and only 58 percent receive paid sick days. In fact, the report showed that for 31 percent of young workers, Labor Day is not a paid holiday. *(For full details go to www.youngworkers2009.org/com.)*

“We owe it to our young workers to solve the health care crisis so they can lead healthy, productive lives free from worry over these astronomical costs,” said Carrigan.

Leading up to Labor Day 2009, Illinois union leaders and rank and file members have been meeting with Congressional members in their district offices to stress the importance of the two core Labor issues – health care reform and the Employee Free Choice Act.

“The Employee Free Choice Act is possibly the most sweeping Labor law reform bill to be introduced in Congress since the National Labor Relations Act (Wagner Act) of 1935,” added Carrigan. “It was also a controversial piece of legislation. But it solidified workers’ rights to form unions and bargain collectively. Now, the time has come to strengthen those rights; to pass majority sign-up, enact stricter penalties for

employers who violate Labor laws, and to establish mediation and arbitration procedures for disputes. We will not back down from those key components. We expect our Representatives and Senators to do the right thing and support working families over corporate interests.”

Labor-sponsored Labor Day events in Illinois are listed below. Please call the contact numbers that are listed for more information.

LABOR DAY 2009

BLOOMINGTON - NORMAL

Sept. 7 – Labor Day Parade with the theme of “Rebuild America – Quality Jobs For All,” followed by a chicken dinner in Miller Park for union members and their families.

Location: Downtown Bloomington – starting at Front and Madison Streets

Time: Parade – 9 a.m. line up, 10 a.m. start

Lunch – 11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Contact: Gary Leake, 309-828-7383

CHAMPAIGN - URBANA

Sept. 7 – Labor Day Parade followed by a Celebration of Labor in the park and softball tournament.

Location: Downtown Urbana

Time: Parade begins at 10 a.m., picnic and tournament immediately following

Contact: 217-352-5151

CHARLESTON

Aug. 29 – Mid-Eastern Illinois CLC Labor Picnic, with food, drinks, and live music.

Location: Fox Ridge State Park, brick pavilion, (8 miles south of Charleston on Rt. 130).

Time: Noon until 4:00 p.m.

Contact: Charles Delman, 217-348-7786 or Matt Pederson, 217-348-5485

CHICAGO

Sept. 7 – Congress Hotel Action

On Labor Day union members and supporters will picket the Congress Hotel in downtown Chicago, sight of America's longest running hotel strike, then deliver a letter to hotel management signed by over 250 community, religious, political and labor leaders in support of striking workers who are members of UNITE HERE Local 1.

The UNITE HERE workers have been on strike since June 15, 2003.

Time: 10:30 am

Contact: 312-663-4373, ext. 231

Sept. 7 – Pullman Labor Day Event

On Labor Day, union members and their families in the Chicago area will honor and celebrate the historic Pullman railroad strike that began in Chicago in 1894 and the struggles of the African American Pullman porters against the railroad for decent wages and working conditions. The celebration will take place at the Pullman State Historic Site, 111th Street and Cottage Grove Avenue. Celebration will feature music, exhibits, food and entertainment.

Time: 2 p.m.

Contact: 773-370-3305 or go to <http://laborday.pullmanevents.info/>.

Sept. 5-6 - The Annual Labor in the Pulpits Labor in the Pulpit is organized by the Chicago Federation of Labor and features union members, shop stewards and elected labor leaders speaking at dozens of different religions services across the Chicagoland area, discussing how labor and religion work hand-in-hand to strengthen families and communities. They will speak at over 100 services.

Locations: TBA
Times: TBA
Contact: 312-222-1000

DECATUR

Aug. 30 – Community Labor Celebration

Location: Macon County Fairgrounds, Maltis Building
Time: 12 Noon – 4 p.m.
Contact: Sarah Sylvester-Drake, 217-422-8537

Sept. 7 – Labor Day Prayer Service

Location: Workers' Memorial Monument, corner of Water and Wood Street
Time: 8:30 a.m.

Sept. 7 – Labor Day Parade with the theme of “Organized Labor Honors Its Military Heroes”

Location: Downtown Decatur, line up on South Franklin Street at Wood Street
Time: 9 a.m. lineup, 10 a.m. start
Contact: Sarah Sylvester-Drake, 217-422-8537

Special Request: All participants and parade-goers are asked to bring non-perishable foods for local food pantries. Union veterans will march at front of parade.

MADISON COUNTY

Alton

Aug. 24-26 – James Stanley Memorial Charity Softball Tournament

Aug. 29 – Labor Celebration Parade, picnic, kid's games
Locations: Tournament and picnic – Gordon Moore Park, Alton, IL
Parade – uptown Alton, line up at the Junior High School
Time: Parade starts at 10 a.m.
Contact: 618-259-7011

GRANITE CITY

Sept. 7 – Labor Day Parade, picnic with music and children's petting zoo

Locations: Parade - Downtown Granite City to Wilson Park
Picnic – Wilson Park
Time: Parade starts at 10 a.m.
Contact: 618-259-7011

MARSEILLES

Sept. 4 – Labor Music Concert featuring entertainer, labor historian, and singer/songwriter Bucky Halker

Location: John Knudson Community Park in Marseilles
Time: 6 p.m.

Help kick off Labor Day weekend at this concert in the park. Hot dogs, popcorn, and drinks will be provided during the performance. Spectators are encouraged to bring lawn chairs.

Contact: David Raikes 815-795-2829

PEORIA

Sept. 7 – Labor Day Parade followed by the annual “Party on the Riverfront” featuring Labor Entertainer Anne Feeney along with The McQueen Street Band

Location: Parade - Downtown Peoria – Free Bus Rides Provided by ATU from the Riverfront to downtown Peoria for the parade.

Labor Day Party – on the Riverfront at parade’s end

Time: Parade starts at 2 p.m.

Contact: Michael Everett, 309-673-3691

QUAD CITIES

Sept. 7 – Labor Day Parade – 26th Annual

Location: East Moline – line up at John Deere Harvester Works – 1100 13th Ave.

Time: Lineup at 8 a.m.; Parade starts at 11:00 a.m.

Contact: Tracy Kurowski, 563-344-0342 or
563-324-9414

QUINCY

Sept. 7 – Labor Day Picnic – food, games, music, door prizes – free to all union members and their families

Location: Machinists Lodge 822, 2929 North 5th Street, Quincy

Time: 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., dinner from 12 Noon – 1:30 p.m.

Contact: 217-222-0394

Special Request: Reservations needed by 8/21/09. Each family is asked to bring 1 or more non-perishable food items for charity when attending the picnic.

ROCKFORD

Sept. 7 – Labor Day Parade with the theme of “Organized Labor Gives Back to Our Community”

Time: 10:00 a.m., lineup at 9:00 a.m. in downtown Rockford

Contact: Trisha Welte, 815-986-4822

Special Request: All participants and parade-goers are asked to bring non-perishable foods for local food pantries.

SPRINGFIELD

Sept. 7– Labor Day Parade

Location: Downtown Springfield – Jefferson Street to 5th, 5th to Capitol, Capitol to 6th, 6th to Washington

Time: 9 a.m. line-up, 10 a.m. start

Contact: 217-528-4042

STREATOR

Sunday, Sept. 6 – Labor Day Parade

Location: Streator Train Station

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Contact: Kelly Reffett, 312-952-1140

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

DuQuoin – Illinois State Fair – Aug. 28 - Sept. 7

Twilight Parade – featuring area Labor unions, 6 p.m. step off

Aug. 28 – Sept. 7 – Labor Pavilion Open each day on the Fair Grounds – sponsored by The Egyptian Building Trades

Sept. 7 – Labor Day Celebration at the Fair – free Barbeque picnic, music and fair rides for union members and their families. Starting at 11 a.m.

Location: DuQuoin State Fair Grounds – just off Route 51 south of DuQuoin

Contact: 618-932-2102