



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

November 2007

LABOR RELATIONS

Labor relations is the relationship between management and groups of workers represented by a union. Butte County Labor Relations is responsible for contract interpretation, contract negotiation, grievances, and training. Labor Relations also handles personnel rule complaints.

The primary responsibility for Butte County Labor Relations is contract interpretation. When there's a question of which contract section applies, or why it doesn't apply, it is the Labor Relations Officer's job to answer the question based on the actual language of the memorandums of understanding (MOU) and the practices of the county in interpreting that language. For example, if there is a question regarding vacation or holiday leave, that would be resolved through Labor Relations.

If the employees or one of the unions files a grievance based on contract language and it goes beyond the authority of the appointing authority (department head) to resolve, the Labor Relations Officer looks at the facts of the grievance and the specific contract language and try to determine if the remedy requested is even available. For example, what compensation is available for an employee assigned in writing to the duties of a higher classification?

Another responsibility is contract negotiations, which we refer to as *meet and confer* on the MOU. Meet and confer is the process that the county and employee associations use to negotiate changes or new sections to the MOUs. There are 9 units of represented employees, and all 9 contracts expire 9/28/8, therefore, the Labor Relations will be busy handling contract negotiations this next year.

Butte County Bargaining Units

1.	BCCOA-GEN	Butte County Correctional Officers' Association – General Unit
2.	BCCOA-MGT	Butte County Correctional Officers' Association – Management Unit
3.	BCEA	Butte County Employees' Association
4.	BCMEA	Butte County Management Employees' Association
5.	CWA	Communication Workers of America (Social Services Worker's Unit)
6.	DSA-GEN	Deputy Sheriffs' Association – General Unit
7.	DSA-MGT	Deputy Sheriffs' Association – Management Unit
8.	PEA	Professional Employees' Association
9.	PPOA	Probation Peace Officers' Association

Most people only think of meet and confer when it has to deal with money, however, California law states that meet and confer covers wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment; for example, changes to personnel rules such as extending military benefits, leaves, holidays, safety footwear, retirement, and health benefits.

The Labor Relations Officer will also participate in providing employee trainings as needed.