

New Business #1 – 16 RA

Action:

At the direction of the president, over the next year, MEA-MFT shall explore piece-meal or full merger opportunities with the Montana Public Employees Association (MPEA). The president shall report outcomes to the 2017 MEA-MFT RA.

Rationale:

MEA-MFT and MPEA are already merged in the Montana Department of Revenue. Our merger there works. As it would also work in the Department of Public Health and Human Services where our two unions each have hundreds of members who work side by side, but under different negotiated agreements. Merger could work in the Department of Corrections where MEA-MFT represents the vast majority of correctional officers and support personnel and MPEA represents correctional officers at Pine Hills. And maybe even throughout the Montana University System where MEA-MFT represents all organized faculty and MPEA almost exclusively represents classified personnel. From a distance each MUS entity looks much like a k-12 school district where across our state MEA-MFT represents teachers and shares with MPEA the honor and responsibility of representing education support professionals. MEA-MFT and MPEA also represent various county and municipal employees whom we believe would profit from a unified union presence.

In this regard, MEA-MFT and MPEA have long carried the primary weight representing state employees in pre-budget negotiations with the governor and then lobbying the deal we make through the legislature. And MEA-MFT and MPEA work together promoting and defending state employee health care and public employee and teacher retirement defined benefit plans.

In short, MEA-MFT and MPEA work side by side, worker by worker, employer by employer in communities large and small. We share the same interests, the same objectives, and the same determination to make Montana the absolutely LAST BEST UNION PLACE in America.

Yes, merger is hard. But we know how to do it in a very large way as when MEA and MFT merged sixteen years ago and in an almost unnoticed way when MEA-MFT and the Montana Nurses Association (MNA) merged registered nurses teaching in the MUS, working in k-12 public schools, and nursing at the Montana State Penitentiary.

It's time.

Estimated Budget Impact:	\$3,000 for travel and meetings with MPEA leadership
Submitted By:	Rich Aarstad, MEA-MFT Secretary Treasurer
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