The Steelworkers

Oldtimer

Volume XI, Number 3 | Pittsburgh, Pa. | PRINTED IN U.S.A. | Autumn, 1988

SOAR Board Sets Aggressive Agenda

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Las Vegas, Nev.—Steelworker retirees are raring to flex their political muscle in the critically important November elections according to reports gathered at the SOAR Executive Board meeting here late in July.

In an all-day session preceded by a first-ever gathering of SOAR district coordinators, officers of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees and participating board members decided to enter the November presidential sweepstakes with both feet by giving endorsed candidates Michael Dukakis and Lloyd Bentsen special backing. Among specific goals are precinct level registration and vote turnout drives, phone bank staffing, literature distributions, letter-mail campaigns and rally attendance. The retirees will work closely with USWA campaigners and other senior organizations at local, county and state levels throughout the nation.

While politics dominated the SOAR deliberations held prior to the USWA's Constitutional Convention in Las Vegas, other matters, including a vigorous membership drive, were on the aggressive agenda. Spurred by two major contract victories in which the concerns of retired Steelworkers were successfully advanced, at LTV and Inco, the board arrived at a consensus on SOAR involvement in USWA collective bargaining. This will be determined by the needs of officials in charge of negotiations with SOAR cooperation to the extent that bargainers deem appropriate and necessary, it was decided.

USWA International Officers, led by Pres. Lynn Williams, emphasized the enviable position of retirees to help clean up the mess in Washington by working to elect candidates who stand with workers and the elderly. "You have the time, experience and the numbers to significantly determine the election outcome," Williams said. Retirees are part of the greatest political force in both the U.S. and Canada, he continued. Predicting that the election race between Dukakis and Bush will be close, Williams warned that the Republicans will heavily outspend the Democrats but what they lack is "organization." Money can be offset through organization, he explained, as was proven in the last New York gubernatorial election where Gov. Mario Cuomo won despite lavish spending by his opponent.

Williams' message to activate retirees in the election campaign was matched earlier by USWA Vice President George Becker

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SOAR EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS are shown above with district SOAR coordinators at meeting in Las Vegas, Nev. just before USWA delegates convened for union's 24th Constitutional Convention and enthusiastically supported SOAR in a special resolution.