

April 2010

## Caltrans members dispute “overstaffing” claim by the LAO

Local 1000 members are taking issue with a recent report by the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) alleging that Caltrans is overstaffed.

“This report is flawed, overlooks key facts, and will only discourage state workers from making extra efforts to keep up productivity in spite of furloughs,” said George Cornell, a materials tester in Sacramento.

The LAO recommends that Caltrans eliminate 1,500 positions in its Capital Outlay Support (COS) program. The LAO said that the COS program’s productivity levels remained constant even after the governor implemented furloughs last year.



**“Despite a 15 percent pay cut – Caltrans workers are being criticized while doing their best to keep California’s roads and bridges safe and well maintained.”**

—Yvonne Walker  
Local 1000 president

The LAO report ignores the fact that many Caltrans employees are required to bank furlough days to finish critical infrastructure projects or to speed up approval on projects funded by federal stimulus money.

“Despite a 15 percent pay cut – Caltrans workers are being criticized while doing their best to keep California’s roads and bridges safe and well maintained,” said Yvonne Walker, Local 1000 president. “Eliminating positions will only add to their workloads and make projects more difficult to keep on track.”

Cornell, a member of the Unit 11 bargaining team, is one of several Caltrans workers planning to testify when the Legislature holds hearings during the budget process this spring.

Letter from Brad Willis,  
Unit 11 Bargaining Chair

## Worker deaths are a sobering reminder

The recent deaths of three Department of Fish and Game (DFG) employees in a helicopter accident are a sobering reminder of the danger – and the importance – of the work we do for the people of California.



Tom Stolberg

I never had the pleasure of meeting these three fellow state employees.

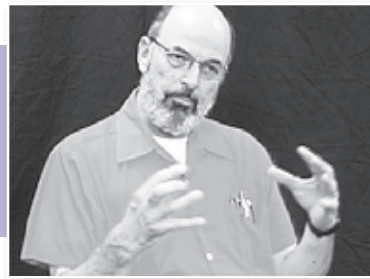
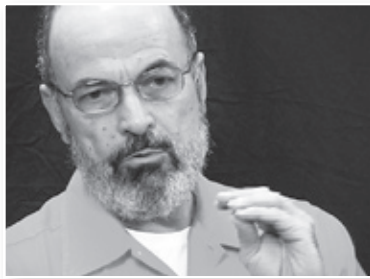
Tom Stolberg, 31, was a scientific aide in Unit 11; Clu Cotter (48) was a senior biologist, and Kevin O’Connor (40) was an associate biologist.

Tom Stolberg’s job was performing aerial surveys to track and document native deer populations, part of DFG’s mission to help the people of California manage the state’s natural resources. I have nothing but the utmost respect and admiration for the work he did.

Our members - flying in helicopters, working in fish hatcheries, inspecting bridges and testing materials on highways - perform difficult work that is often not fully known or appreciated by the general public. It is work that can seem routine until something suddenly goes wrong. Then, it’s very dangerous.

I want all Unit 11 members to join me in giving our condolences to Tom Stolberg’s loved ones. I encourage us all to reflect on the importance of our work, as well as to remind us to do our best to work smart and stay safe.

James “Brad” Willis is a Fish and Wildlife Technician at Mojave River State Fish Hatchery and serves as chair of Local 1000’s Bargaining Unit 11.



## Member Profile

# George Cornell – helping California’s economy grow

As a Materials Research & Engineering Associate for Caltrans, George Cornell is responsible for specialized laboratory and field-testing of the resources and manufactured products Caltrans uses to build and maintain our highways and bridges.

Among the items that he’s evaluating: pavement markers, safety cones and the geotextural fabric used in roadway construction. Asphalt and concrete, the primary materials used to build highways, have also come under Cornell’s scrutiny. And while he’s focused on ensuring that the items he reviews meet rigid specifications for reliability as well as cost effectiveness, he keeps his eye on the big picture as well.

“California business has a huge reliance on our roads and highways,” Cornell said. “A good infrastructure helps the economy grow.”

Caltrans’ Materials Engineering and Testing service – located in Sacramento – also provides inspections and expert technical advice on all phases of transportation engineering, as well as

developing guidelines, technical standards and procedure manuals.

**“California business has a huge reliance on our roads and highways. A good infrastructure helps the economy grow.”**

—George Cornell  
Materials & Engineering Research Associate,  
Sacramento

“We work to make pavement last longer and to shorten roadway closures during maintenance and construction. With the economy and the budget the way it is, you want to get the biggest bang for the buck,” Cornell said.

Proud of the work he does, Cornell feels he’s “contributing a lot to the state.” But behind that pride is an intense curiosity. “I like discovering new things ... it’s like the puzzle is coming together.”

## Fish & Game efforts profiled at public event

The important, but largely unheralded, work of Unit 11 workers at Fish and Game came front and center at the Northwest Fish Culture Conference held in early December in Redding. The annual meeting brought together fish culturists from a number of western states to exchange information and ideas about all aspects of fish culture.

“Much of what we do at Fish and Game is usually behind the scenes,” said Brad Willis, Unit 11 bargaining chair and a

fish and wildlife technician at the Mojave State Fish Hatchery. “This was not only a morale booster, but a great opportunity to raise our profile among co-workers as well as the industry at large.”

### Nimbus hatchery profiled

Part of DFG’s presentation included a Channel 1000 feature on the Nimbus Fish Hatchery in Rancho Cordova – shot earlier in the year during the

annual salmon spawning season. (To see that video, go to [channel1000.org](http://channel1000.org)).

More than 20 state employees joined Local 1000 during the three-day event.

“Our Unit 11 members received tremendous recognition for the work they do as stewards of California’s wildlife,” Willis said. “After learning more about how Local 1000 supported their work, they joined our ranks to make our message stronger.”

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