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Carson Division 18 is dedicated to helping the participants lose weight in every way, even teaching them what a healthy meal looks like. From left: Ben Cooper, Demetrius Jones, Richelle Rayford, Laretta Meadows and Shannon Holley put together healthy salads and sandwiches for those interested in weight loss. Bernard Warren managed to sneak into the picture, in the back... *Photos by Jimmy Stroup*



Division 18 Looking for the Biggest "Loser"

- Weight loss competition has more than 50 participants

By JIMMY STROUP

(March 18, 2008) Carson Division 18 wants more healthy losers. So more than 50 division employees have come together to lose weight and improve overall health in the first UTU Carson Division 18 Fitness Challenge.

Split into three groups, each is led by a transportation assistant manager: Cheryl Brown, Patsy Goens and Demetrius Jones. The operators signed a contract and agreed to bi-monthly weigh-ins to measure their progress through the spring.

"The group that comes out with the greatest reduction in body fat will get a healthy lunch on the management," Brown said.

But a free lunch is not the only incentive. The UTU has agreed to fund prizes for the top three individuals whose body fat is lowered the most.



Operator Victor Andrews is one of the leaders of the UTU Carson Division 18 Fitness Challenge. The weight loss competition involves a weigh-in every two weeks on this medical-grade scale, as well as a measurement on a device that calculates body fat. Division Steno Mayra Cortez is also participating in the team competition.

The third-place prize is a \$50 gift card to McCormick and Schmick's seafood restaurant. The second-place winner receives a \$150 gift card to a day spa. And the first-place prize is an American Express gift card the winner can use to pamper herself or himself.

"We got the union involved on this one because they care about the health of the operators as much as we do," Brown said.

"If this works out as well as I'm hoping, maybe we can get some other divisions involved in a similar program.

Another in a group of fitness opportunities

The challenge was suggested by operators Victor Andrews and Mike Booher. Andrews already runs the weekend aerobics class the division has for its employees.

The Division 18 Fitness Challenge was modeled on the NBC television show "The Biggest Loser," a reality program that presents people competing to lose the most weight in a certain period.

The division's program measures a reduction in body fat, which may not be as thrilling but does give a better indication of the actual benefits to overall health, Brown said.

The separation of participants into management-led groups is a normal thing at Division 18, which routinely works with team-building exercises. Assistant Transportation Manager Patsy Goens said that breeding a little healthy competition into an event is a good way to increase the participation.

"I'm really proud of the people around here," Goens said. "We're really working hard at improving the health of our people. The operators are participating in this whole-heartedly. I'm excited to see who will end up winning."