



NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

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PORTLAND, OREGON

FEBRUARY 6, 2015



Mascots of McDonald's and Walmart called on their respective companies to pay their workers \$15 an hour during a Oregon Needs a Raise rally Jan. 24 at the State Capitol in Salem. The rally drew large support from labor unions.

Unions join rally for \$15 minimum wage

SALEM — Union members were among the several hundred workers rallying at the State Capitol Jan. 24 for a \$15 state minimum wage. The event was organized by 15 Now Oregon, but it had strong backing from more than a dozen unions.

The Oregon AFL-CIO and most labor unions in the state have endorsed the push to make Oregon the first state to enact a \$15 minimum wage.

Democrats who control the

Oregon Legislature (and the governor's office) will consider several bills that would gradually raise the minimum wage, which currently is \$9.25 an hour. One bill would increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2018. Another bill would raise it to \$12.20 by 2017, then adjust it for inflation after that. Also on the docket is a bill to repeal the preemption law that prevents cities and

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NW Labor Press gets a makeover

With this issue, the Northwest Labor Press is launching a new page design. We value tradition, but we also felt overdue for a new look. The previous design had been in place with only minor changes since 1993.

We think the new design makes better use of our space, has a more internally consistent look, and is more engaging visually. We've also increased the point size slightly, and we think you'll find it easier to read.

In case there are any journeyman design nerds reading this: The new design uses the Myriad font family for display elements, and Times, the old standby, for body text (at 10 pt size, with 11 pt leading).

The paper conforms to tabloid dimensions (11"x14") and is printed on recycled paper using soy-based inks by members of Graphic Communications Conference/Teamsters Local 747-M at Rotary Offset Press in Kent, Washington.

We hope you like the new look. And we welcome your feedback and suggestions.

Drop us a line at editor@nwlaborpress.org.

Big change to law on union pensions

Pensioners could share the pain under a new law that lets trustees cut benefits to make plans solvent

By Don McIntosh
Associate Editor

A new law passed by Congress in December could affect more than one million union workers and retirees who are covered by union-sponsored multi-employer pension plans. The law, which is now in effect, allows the trustees of severely distressed pension plans to reduce benefits for current and future retirees — if doing so can save the plan from future insolvency.

Plans that are allowed to cut benefits are those that are forecasted to run out of money

within 15 years (or 20 years if they have more than twice as many retirees as active workers). There are restrictions on the cuts: Benefits can't be cut at all for retirees aged 80 or over, or who are receiving a disability pension, and retirees ages 75 to 79 are subject to smaller cuts than those under 75. And when trustees reduce benefits, they are required to do so first for those whose employers went out of business or otherwise withdrew from the plan without paying all of their obligations, before they reduce the benefits of any other plan participants.

Trustees can't cut benefits more than the amount needed to prevent insolvency. And no benefits can be cut below 110 percent of the amount guaranteed

by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC), the self-funded federal agency that insures pensions. That amount is pretty low to begin with. When PBGC gets involved in an insolvent multi-employer pension plan, its maximum benefit, for a retiree with 30 years of service, is only \$1,072.50 a month, or \$12,870 a year.

Before trustees can reduce promised benefits, they have to inform all plan members, and hold a vote. The proposed cuts can be rejected, but only by a "no" vote of a majority of plan participants (active, inactive vested, and retired), not just a majority of those voting. And even if a majority of participants

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THE DISAPPEARING STRIKE

2014 had the second fewest strikes since record-keeping began in 1947

By Don McIntosh
Associate Editor

Nine. That's the total number of work stoppages last year that involved over 1,000 U.S. workers. It's the second-lowest level ever recorded since the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) began keeping track in 1947. The record — thus far — was set in 2009, when just five work stoppages of over 1,000 workers took place.

Looking back over the last 67 years, this data set tells a story — of the near total disappearance of the strike. In the 1950s, there were an average of 352 large-scale work stoppages a year. In the 1960s and 1970s, the rate slowed only slightly — to an average of 286 a year. The peak was 1952, when 2.7 million workers took part in 470 large-scale work stoppages.



But the last truly big strike year was 1974, and you can see the numbers plummet after 1981. That's the year President Ronald Reagan fired 11,345 air traffic controllers for violating a prohibition on strikes by federal employees. Since 1981, there have never been more than

100 large work stoppages a year, and the number continues to ratchet down. Since 1989, there have been fewer than 50 work stoppages a year; since 2000, fewer than 30; and since 2007, fewer than 20. BLS uses the term "work stoppages" to include both strikes by workers and

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**NORTHWEST
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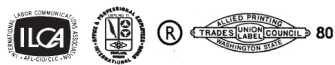
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CORRECTIONS: See an error? Please let us know at editor@nwlaborpress.org or by phone at 503-288-3311.

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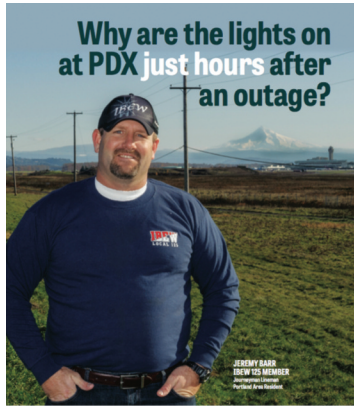
Lights on? Thank an IBEW member

IBEW Local 125 launches ad campaign for residents of Oregon and SE Washington

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 125 has a message for residents of Oregon and Southeast Washington: Your electric power is safe and reliable — because union members are trained and ready to answer the call. That’s the theme of a series of full-page ads that ran in mid-to late-January in newspapers in areas served by PacifiCorp.

“Why are the lights on at PDX just hours after an outage?” asks one such ad, which ran in Willamette Week. “Because IBEW 125 lineman Jeremy Barr has a 21-year head start.”

“The communities the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers 125 serves are where we live and work, and in Portland, the people we serve are our neighbors,” the ad continues. “Linemen like Jeremy train for three and a half years



Because IBEW 125 Lineman Jeremy Barr has a 21-year head start.

“I love the Portland area — I’ve lived in Battle Ground with my family for over 30 years. I started working in middle management and became an IBEW 125 member in 2004. Eight years learning electrical theory and training before I was ready to replace transformers and repair lines. And when a line knocked out the power to PDX, my team and I worked around the clock to get the airport back up and running.”

“The communities the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers 125 serves are where we live and work, and in Portland, the people we serve are our neighbors. Linemen like Jeremy train for three and a half years — longer than it takes to become a lawyer — before they go to work in your community. That training helps keep the lights on and prevents accidents. And because power outages can happen at any time, IBEW 125 linemen are on call 24 hours a day.”



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Learn more about our work at www.IBEW125.com.

— longer than it takes to become a lawyer — before they go to work in your community. That training helps keep the lights on and prevents accidents. And because power outages can happen at any time, IBEW 125 linemen are on call 24 hours a day.”

“It’s an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the work our members do,” explains Local 125 business representative

Marcy Grail.

The print ads — as well as a web component — were developed by San Francisco based Storefront Political Media, a firm that has done work in the past for IBEW Local 1245.

Besides the Portland ad, which featured Barr, Local 125’s ads have included members Jeremy White in Bend, Marilyn Brockey in Astoria, Butch Wilson in Pendleton, and Doug Hinds in Walla Walla.

Amazon.com gets a union landlord

SEATTLE — An entity related to the AFL-CIO Building Investment Trust (BIT) has purchased Blanchard Plaza, 2201 Sixth Ave., Seattle, for \$120.7 million, reports the Daily Journal of Commerce.

In an ironic twist, the 15-story, 255,818-square-foot building is 100 percent leased to the not-so-union-friendly Amazon.com through 2026.

BIT purchased the building from Shorenstein Properties of San Francisco.

Steelworkers strike Anacortes, 8 other U.S. refineries

About 230 workers at the Tesoro Anacortes Refinery in Washington are among 3,800 members of the United Steelworkers Union (USW) on strike at nine U.S. refineries.

The workers walked out Feb. 1 at five refineries in Texas, two in California, and one in Kentucky. It is the union’s largest strike since 1980.

USW is bargaining with Royal Dutch Shell, which is serving as the lead company in national oil bargaining. Whenever this deal gets settled, the contract terms will be used as a model for other companies within the industry.

Negotiations started Jan. 21. The union is seeking a three-year deal. Sticking points are staffing and maintenance, including the use of contract employees.

USW represents about 30,000 workers at 65 U.S. refineries and over 230 refineries, oil terminals, pipelines and petrochemical facilities in the U.S. The facilities not targeted for strike are operating under a rolling 24-hour contract extension. This includes a Shell refinery in Anacortes.

ONLINE EXTRA
See all five ads at nwlaborpress.org/2015/01/ibew-ads/

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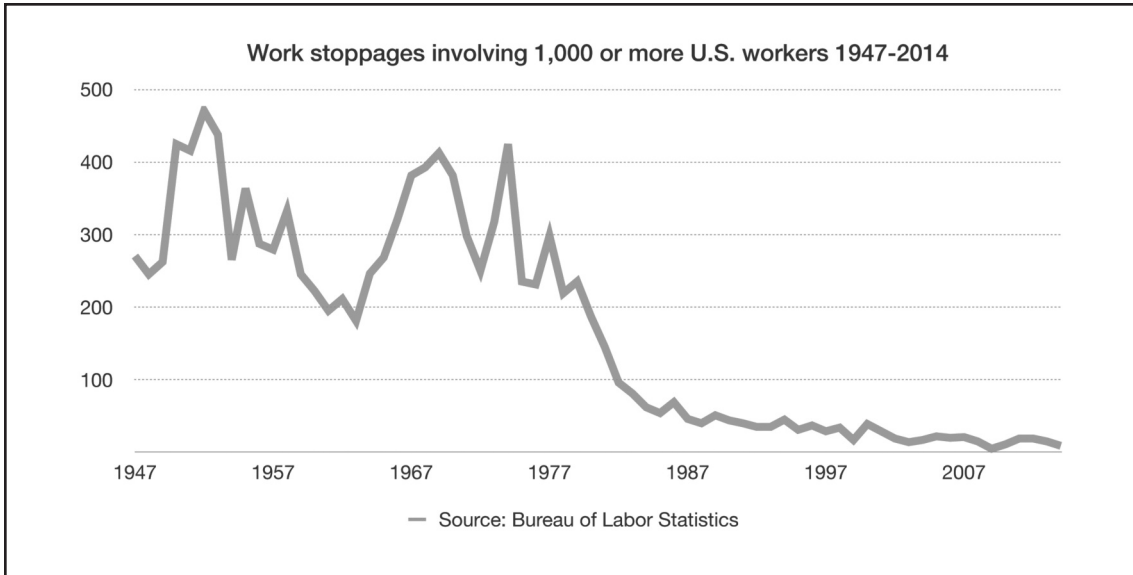
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...THE DISAPPEARING STRIKE

From Page 1

lock-outs by employers.

Today's strikes aren't just fewer in number than the strikes of old; they also tend to be

shorter. Strikes in the '50s and '60s lasted two to three weeks on average. Today's strikes seem to come in two varieties: Short symbolic strikes of a day

or two called by unions to protest employer lawbreaking, and drawn-out strikes or lock-outs caused by employers seeking dramatic concessions.

Port to weigh PDX worker reforms

Port of Portland staff are continuing to work on an "equity" policy that could improve conditions for workers at Portland International Airport (PDX). The Port is a public agency responsible for the airport and marine and industrial facilities, and it's overseen by a commission appointed by the governor.

At the Port Commission's Jan. 14 meeting, Port assistant executive director Curtis Robinhold said the proposed policy would likely be presented at the Commission's March 11 meeting.

He said the Port can't set a minimum wage for airport work-

ers because of a state law preempting local minimum wage ordinances. But the policy would likely include some "worker retention" language providing job security to workers when a contract changes hands. New restaurants or janitorial contractors, for example, might be required to hire from a pool of workers laid off from the previous contractor — if the Port of Portland adopts a retention policy similar to one in place in several other West Coast airports.

UNITE HERE Local 8, which represents some concessions workers at airport restaur-

rants, has been calling on the Port to adopt such a policy.

On Jan. 8, UNITE HERE reported the results of a survey of more than 100 concessions workers at PDX. The union survey found that the majority make just above minimum wage. The median wage for

The nine major work stoppages of 2014

These nine strikes weren't the only ones last year, just the only strikes involving over 1,000 workers.

- **University of Illinois (Chicago)** 1,100 members of UIC United Faculty Local 6456 struck for two days Feb. 18-19.
- **Johns Hopkins Hospital (Baltimore)** 2,000 members of Service Employees International Union Local 1099 struck for three days April 9-11.
- **L-3 Communications Army Fleet Support (Fort Rucker, Alabama)** 3,000 members of Machinists Lodge 2003 struck for five days April 28- May 4.
- **Waukegan School District 60 (Waukegan, Illinois)** 1,200 members of Lake County Federation of Teachers, Local 504 struck for 20 days Oct. 2-30.
- **Kaiser Permanente, Sutter Tracy, Community Health, and Ascencion Health hospitals (Northern and Central California)** 20,000 members of California Nurses Association/ National Nurses United held a one-day strike Nov. 11.
- **SFO Airport Restaurant Employer Council (San Francisco International Airport)** 1,000 members of UNITE HERE Local 2 struck for two days Dec. 11-12.
- **MedStar Washington Hospital Center (Washington, D.C.)** 1,900 members of National Nurses United struck seven days Dec. 22-31.
- **Zodiac Seats US (Gainesville, Texas)** 1,300 members of Teamsters Local 767 struck for 29 days Sept. 23 to Oct. 25.
- **FairPoint Communications (Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont)** 1,700 members of Communications Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers went on strike Oct. 17 and have remained on strike since then.

non-supervisory workers like cooks, cashiers and baristas was \$9.30 an hour. Just 16 percent got health insurance through their employer. Another 15 percent get insurance through Medicaid, the government insurance program for the poor, and 24 percent said they receive food

stamps. And 27 percent said they had chosen not to eat when they were hungry in the past year because of concerns about money. The survey also found high turnover: 40 percent of respondents had been working there six months or less, and the median was just one year.



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UP IS DOWN

How the Oregonian stretched the facts to argue that a massive minimum wage increase wouldn't help workers

By Don McIntosh
Associate Editor

On Jan. 8, University of Oregon published a report contending that low-wage employers are being subsidized by taxpayers — because their workers qualify for public assistance programs. And the UO Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) report used that as an argument in favor of raising the minimum wage.

But two weeks later, the Oregonian newspaper turned that same argument upside down, based on a state study requested by Republican state Rep. Julie Parrish of West Linn. The front-page Jan. 23 article was accompanied by a 200-point-type “screamer” headline, and ran with a graph purporting to show that raising the minimum to \$15 an hour doesn't help workers much, because every dollar they gain reduces their food stamps, earned income tax credit, and childcare benefits.

Published the day before a state Capitol rally to raise the minimum wage, the article came off as a provocation aimed at a growing labor-backed cam-

paign to raise wages for Oregon's lowest-paid. Lawmakers have introduced bills for phased-in minimum wage increases to \$15 an hour and to \$12.20.

“It's shameful what The Oregonian did,” said Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain, a point person for the coalition pushing a big minimum wage increase.

Raahi Reddy and Ellen Scott, authors of the LERC study, say the Oregonian analysis appears to break down the closer you look at it. For one thing, it's clear that Parrish cherry-picked the sample: She asked the Legislative Revenue Office to estimate the impact on a single parent with two children. The Oregonian had access to the report, but didn't make it publicly available for others to check its methodology and accuracy. The Oregonian article does reveal (on paragraph 11 after a jump to Page 10) that the figures were based on just one theoretical family with a single parent with two young children who works full-time at minimum wage.

But it appears that for the

“The Oregonian and elected politicians all talk about good middle class jobs, but when it comes right down to it, their music doesn't back up their dancing. They're out of step with what's going on in the country.”

— Oregon AFL-CIO president
Tom Chamberlain

Oregonian's numbers to pan out, the single parent would have to be one of the lucky few getting benefits in the underfunded state-administered Employment Related Day Care subsidy program. Oregon State University public health researcher Bobbie Weber says few people even know about that program, which serves less than 20 percent of those eligible — fewer than 10,000 families. For them, the “benefit cliff” is real, in that raises can cause them to lose the day care benefit — under current rules, which have a hard in-

come limit. But nothing stops the state from changing eligibility rules to gradually taper off benefits instead. That would render moot the Oregonian's hypothetical case of the worker who lost income thanks to a minimum wage increase.

The bigger flaw is that the Oregonian article says nothing about the impact a \$3 to \$5 an hour increase would have on the rest of the 400,000 Oregonians who LERC estimated earn poverty-level wages at or below \$12 an hour. Yes, workers on food stamps would lose some benefit for every wage increase they get, but they'd still come out substantially ahead. Same goes for the Earned Income Tax Credit, which was specifically designed to reward work by tapering off gradually. Plus, the Earned Income Tax Credit may be a hugely successful anti-poverty program, but delivers its benefits but once a year at tax time with a big refund. A minimum wage increase, on the other hand, would be felt within a week of taking effect.

“The thing that disturbed me the most in that article is the im-

plication that we ought to maintain the status quo of low wages subsidized by tax dollars,” said OSU researcher Scott, who did in-depth interviews with 44 low-wage single mothers for the LERC report. “We shouldn't be arguing for that. These families repeatedly told us they don't want to rely on public assistance. They want to be self-sufficient. And on \$9 or \$10 an hour they can't.”

“The business lobby, The Oregonian and elected politicians all talk about good middle class jobs, but when it comes right down to it, their music doesn't back up their dancing,” said Chamberlain, the AFL-CIO president. “They're out of step with what's going on in the country. If you look at the data, 25 percent of the workforce make poverty wages and 49 percent of all new jobs make less than \$12 an hour. You can't talk about a vibrant economy unless you address that. So yes, we support 15 Now. We think it's the government's responsibility to make work pay a livable wage.”

Oregon ranks No. 7 nationally in union density

Unions in the United States added 48,000 new members to their ranks in 2014, according to a Jan. 23 report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Employment grew by about 2.3 million workers, resulting in a decline in union density. The percentage of the workforce with union membership dropped 0.2 points to 11.1 percent. That's the lowest percentage since the government began producing comparable estimates in 1983, when it was 20.1 percent.

Of the 14.6 million union members in the U.S., 7.2 million were in the public sector and 7.4 million were in the private sector.

Union membership in Oregon was estimated at 243,000 — up 35,000 from 2013. The rate of union growth was the largest in the country, taking it from 13.9 percent of the workforce in 2013, to 15.6 percent last year — seventh highest in the nation.

Washington, with an estimated

491,000 union members, ranked fourth in the proportion of its workforce that was unionized (16.8 percent). Those numbers are down from 2013, when the BLS reported 546,000 union members in the state, representing 18.9 percent of the workforce.

New York continued to have the highest union membership rate (24.6 percent), followed by Alaska (22.8 percent), Hawaii (21.8 percent), Washington, New Jersey (16.5 percent), and California (16.3 percent).

North Carolina again had the lowest rate at just 1.9 percent.

The percentage of employed women who were union members remained constant at 10.5 percent, while the rate for men dropped by 0.2 of a percentage point to 11.7 percent.

The union membership rate was highest among workers aged 55 to 64 (14.1 percent), and lowest among workers aged 16 to 24 (4.5 percent).

The most-unionized occupations were local government (41.9 percent), utilities (22.3 percent), transportation and warehousing (19.6 percent), telecommunications (14.8 percent), and construction (13.9 percent).

Agriculture (1.1 percent), finance (1.3 percent), and bars and restaurants (1.4 percent) were the least unionized.

The BLS data show that union membership boosts wages. Full-time union workers had median weekly earnings of \$970 compared to \$763 for nonunion workers. The difference was even bigger in some occupations: Median weekly earnings for union construction workers was \$1,123, compared to \$724 for nonunion.

The median wage last year for union women age 16 and older was \$904 — 89 percent of the \$1,015 weekly for union men. The median for nonunion women was \$687 — 82 percent of the \$840 weekly median for nonunion men.

“The wage gap for women in unions is much smaller than for women who are nonunion workers,” said Joan Entmacher, vice president for Family Economic Security at the National Women's Law Center. “But last year the rate of union membership for women was flat. To promote equal pay for women, it's time for lawmakers to stop the attacks on unions — and strengthen workers' rights to organize.”

The BLS union membership report is a pretty accurate depiction of trends at the national level, but at the state level, data can be misinterpreted because minor year-to-year fluctuations — particularly in less populous states — may not be statistically significant. Oregon's percentage in the report has fluctuated in the last decade, with a low of 13.8 percent in 2006 and a high of 17.1 percent in 2011. Oregon has about 1.2 percent of the U.S. population.

(Editor's Note: Press Associates Inc. contributed to this report.)

Taxi drivers appeal to City: No special rules for Uber

By Don McIntosh
Associate Editor

Kedir Wako never imagined he'd one day share a stage with Broadway Cab general manager Raye Miles at a Pioneer Courthouse Square political rally. Wako was a leading member of a group of Broadway Cab drivers who protested exploitive conditions, formed a driver self-help association, and ultimately broke away to form a new union-affiliated cab co-op. Now Wako is president of that co-op, Union Cab. But on Jan. 13, Wako put aside bygones for a common cause: Getting the City of Portland to insist that companies like Uber play by the same rules as the taxi companies they compete with.

Portland, like many other cities, regulates taxi rates, caps the number of vehicles, and requires driver background checks, vehicle inspections and proof of insurance, among other rules. But on Dec. 5, Uber launched its app-based ride service in Portland in violation of those regulations. Two weeks later, Portland Mayor Charlie Hales announced the City would propose a new set of taxi rules by April 9 that would allow companies like Uber to operate legally. And Uber announced it



Portland taxi drivers rallied Jan. 13 at Pioneer Courthouse Square. Cab companies want the City of Portland to make ride-sharing companies like Uber play by the same rules as they do.

would suspend its service until then.

The City has a long-established volunteer citizen review board known as the Private For-Hire Transportation Board of Review. The board includes an elected taxi driver representative, a taxi industry representative, a disability advocate, an airport representative, a tourism official, and others. But instead of turning to that board, which has decades of collective experience with taxi rules, Hales and City Commissioner Steve Novick appointed a brand-new Private For-Hire Transportation Innovation Task Force, with no representative from taxi drivers or compa-

nies, and no real familiarity with the industry.

That didn't sit well with taxi companies or drivers. To make sure their voice is heard in the new rule-making process, six Portland taxi companies formed a new group, the Transportation Fairness Alliance. Its launch party was the attention-grabbing rally, with parked cabs covering Pioneer Courthouse Square.

"We welcome competition, as long as everyone plays by the same rules," Radio Cab superintendent Noah Ernst told rally participants. Despite the current cap on the number of City permits (460), Ernst said the industry is quite competitive. Existing

companies and would-be competitors have applied for over 100 additional permits, only to encounter a protracted and perplexing decision process by city bureaucrats.

"We are as frustrated as anybody when you can't get a cab at peak hours," Ernst said.

The day after the rally, members of the new task force met for the first time for an orientation led by City officials and taxi regulators. The 12-member task force includes representatives from the Portland Business Alliance, the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association, and a software and technology trade association, as well as a night club owner, an insurance consultant, and disability, environ-

mental and immigrants rights advocates.

"We don't usually in the context of American capitalism regulate rates and limit entry into markets," Novick, who is in charge of the Bureau of Transportation, told the group. So, Novick said, the task force should consider whether or not the City should continue to do those things.

The task force heard a presentation from taxi companies Feb. 4, and will hear from taxi drivers Feb. 10, from "transportation network companies" like Uber on Feb. 19, and from the public on Feb. 25. In March, they'll work to come up with regulations, which would be presented to City Council April 9.

City of Portland to consider \$15 an hour for contract workers

The idea of a \$15-an-hour wage floor is continuing to gain momentum. On Feb. 18, Portland City Council will hold a hearing about updating the City's 20-year-old living wage ordinance, which sets minimum wage and benefit levels for several groups of contract employees: janitors and security guards

at city buildings, attendants at city-owned parking lots, and some workers at city-owned Providence Park.

Under the City's current Fair Wage Policy, the workers must be paid at least \$10.38 an hour plus \$1.92 an hour for benefits. The group 15 Now PDX is calling for that minimum to rise to \$15 an hour, and benefits to \$2 an hour — effective Jan. 1, 2016. Commissioner Dan Saltzman is in favor of that proposal, which is also backed by Laborers Local 483 and by Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 49, which represents janitors and security guards. "We want to see it as a springboard, challenging private sector owners to step up," said Local 49 organizing director Maggie Long.

City Council will take public feedback on the issue Feb. 18 at 2 p.m. at City Hall, and could vote on an increase then or at a later date.

If a \$15 minimum passes, the City would become the third Portland-area government body to set that standard for at least some workers, following Home Forward (the local public housing agency) and Multnomah County. It would also mean sizable raises for over 100 workers, including 62 janitors employed by Portland Habilitation Center and 30 security guards employed by G4S. The janitors make \$12 to \$13.80 under their union contract, and the security guards make \$12 to \$14.50 under theirs.

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UNION MEETING NOTICES

AFSCME 189

Executive Board meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10. General membership meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24. Meetings are at 6025 E. Burnside St., Portland.

Cement Masons 555

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 19, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

Elevator Constructors 23

Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 12779 NE Whitaker Way, Portland.

Fire Fighters 452 (Vancouver)

Members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 4, at 2807 NW Fruit Valley Rd., Vancouver, Wash.

Fire Fighters 1660 (Tualatin Valley)

Members meet 8 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, at 4411 SW Sunset Dr., Lake Oswego.

Glaziers 740

Eugene area members meet 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 9, at Best Western Grand Manor Inn, 971 Kruse Way, Springfield.

Salem area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, at Best Western Plus, Mill Creek Inn, 3125 Ryan Drive SE, Salem.

IBEW 48

Public Sector Employment Workshop 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, in the Meeting Hall.

Electrical Workers Minority Caucus meets 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, in the Executive Boardroom.

Residential Unit meets 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, in the Dispatch Lobby.

Sound and Communication Unit meets 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11, in the Meeting Hall. NOTE Time Change.

Wasco Unit meets 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, at Northern Wasco County PUD, 2345 River Road, The Dalles. NOTE Day Change.

Washington Unit Meeting meets at 6:00 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, at the

Longview Hall, 1145 Commerce Ave, Longview, Washington.

Bylaws Committee meets 5:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 16, in the Executive Boardroom.

Executive Board Meeting meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 18, in the Executive Boardroom.

Meetings are at 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland, unless otherwise noted.

DEATH ASSESSMENTS: No. 2419, Dale E. Greeley; No. 2420, William H. Cummings; No. 2421,

Steven L. Russell; No. 2422, John P. Miller; and No. 2423, Nathan J. Jackson. The Feb. 2015 assessment is \$1.50.

Insulators 36

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11. Members meet 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 13. Meetings are at 11145 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Iron Workers 29

Members meet 7 p.m., Thursday, March 5, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir., #200, Portland.

Iron Workers Shopmen 516

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12. **SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE** - Thursday, February 26, at 6 p.m. Purpose of meeting: in the event a quorum is not present, to conduct local union business and second reading of proposed changes to by laws. Special Meeting Saturday, March 7, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. Purpose of meeting – 3rd and final reading and Vote on proposed changes to by laws. If necessary, Special Meeting Thursday, March 26, 2015 at 6 p.m. To conduct regular union business and first reading of proposed changes to bylaws. Meetings are held at 11620 NE Ainsworth Circle, Portland OR.

Laborers 320

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, at Joe Edgar Hall, Teamsters' Complex, 1850 NE 162nd Ave., Portland.

Laborers/Vancouver 335

Members meet 7 p.m. Monday, March 2, preceded by a 6:15 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at the Vancouver Labor Center, 2212 NE Andresen Rd., Vanc., Wash.

Laborers 483 Municipal Employees

Members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 17, at the Musicians Hall, 325 NE 20th Ave., Portland.

Linoleum Layers 1236

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Molders 139B

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 19, preceded by a 6 p.m. Executive Board meeting at the Carpenters Hall, 2205 N. Lombard, Portland.

Office & Professional Employees Local 11

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 10, at the OPEIU LOCAL 11 meeting hall, 3815 Columbia Street, Vancouver, Washington,

Operating Engineers 701

District 3 members meet 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, at North Bend/Coos Bay Labor Center, 3427 Ash St., North Bend.

District 3 members meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11, at Holiday Inn Express, 285 Peninger Rd., Central Point.

District 2 members meet 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, at the Comfort Suites, 969 Kruse Way, Springfield.

Painters & Drywall Finishers 10

Members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 18, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland. Website: www.iupatocal10.org

Sign Painters & Paint Makers 1094

Members meet 3:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 16, in the District Office, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Plasterers 82

Members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 4, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

Plumbers and Fitters 290

Portland area members meet 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 20, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin. The following locations will be able to participate remotely in the Regular Business Meeting at 7:30 on the 3rd Friday of every month: Bend, Eugene/Springfield, Eureka, Medford, and Salem.

Astoria area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26, at the Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane St., Astoria.

Brookings area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24. Please contact agent Craig Spjut at 707-496-1767 for location confirmation.

Coos Bay area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, at the Coos Bay Training Center, 2nd & Kruse, Coos Bay.

Klamath Falls area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, at 4816 S. 6th St., Klamath Falls.

The Dalles area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, at the United Steelworkers Local 9170 Union Hall, The Dalles.

Roofers & Waterproofers 49

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12. Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, March 5. Meetings are at 5032 SE 26th Ave, Portland. (Phone: 503 232-4807)

Sheet Metal Workers 16

Portland members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th

Ave., Portland.

Medford area members meet 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11, at Wild River Pizza, 2684 N. Pacific Hwy., Medford.

Eugene area members meet 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, at 1887 Laura St., Springfield.

Coos Bay area members meet 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 19, at Abby's Pizza, 997 First St., Coos Bay.

Women of Sheet Metal meet 4:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 20, at Beulahland, 118 NE 28th Ave., Portland. Children are welcome.

Portland area VOC meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 4, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

CENTRAL LABOR COUNCILS

Central Oregon

Delegates meet 5:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 23, at the Social Justice Center, 155 NE Irving, Bend.

Lane County

Delegates meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 1116 South A St., Springfield.

Linn-Benton-Lincoln

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25, preceded by a 6:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 1400 Salem Ave., Albany.

Marion-Polk-Yamhill

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, followed by a 7 p.m. general meeting at 4735 Liberty Road, S., Salem.

Mid-Columbia

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, at 3313 W. 2nd, The Dalles.

Northwest Oregon

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 23, at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

Southeastern Oregon

Delegates meet 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, at the Woodworkers Hall, 3836 Altamont Drive, Klamath Falls.

Southern Oregon

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, at the Labor Temple, 4480 Rogue Valley Hwy. #3, Central Point.

Southwestern Oregon

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Monday, March 2, at the Bay Area Labor Center, 3427 Ash, North Bend.

Southwest Washington

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 4, preceded by an Executive Board meeting, at the Laborers Hall, 2212 NE Andresen, Vancouver.

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCILS

Columbia-Pacific

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10 and Feb. 17, at Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th, Portland.

Lane, Coos, Curry & Douglas

Delegates meet at noon Wednesday, Feb. 25, at the Springfield Training Center, 2861 Pierce Pkwy., Springfield.

Salem

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Thursday, March 5, at the IBEW 280 Training Center, 33309 Hwy 99E, Tangent.

METAL TRADES COUNCIL

Portland & Vicinity

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 12. Delegates meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24.

Meetings are at the IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

HAPPENINGS

Rally for universal health care Feb. 11

Health Care for All Oregon is organizing a rally on the Capitol steps in Salem Wednesday, Feb. 11, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., to call on lawmakers to create a universal health care system for Oregon.

State Sen. Michael Dembrow was able to pass legislation in 2013 authorizing a privately-funded study of how to best fund a universal health care system in Oregon, but it would take \$200,000 to fund the study, and the group has raised just \$50,000 so far. Another bill will be submitted in 2015 to fund the remainder.

Dembrow — the Legislature's leading supporter of universal health care — will headline the Feb. 11 rally, which will also feature jazz musician Norm Sylvester, the Raging Grannies, and "Mad As Hell Minutes," an opportunity for participants to share their own health care stories.

Health Care for All-Oregon is a grassroots coalition of over 100 organizations, including unions, businesses, non-profits and church groups. The group is organizing bus transportation and car pools from Portland, Corvallis, Eugene, Ashland, LaGrande and the Oregon Coast. Visit hcao.org to register.

RETIREE MEETING NOTICES

AFSCME

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 17 at the AFSCME office, 6025 E. Burnside, Portland. Call Michael Arken for information at 1-800-521-5954 ext. 226.

Alliance for Retired Americans Oregon Chapter

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, followed by an 11 a.m. General Membership meeting, in the Labor Services board room, at AFL-CIO Boardroom, 3642 SE 32nd, Portland. All retirees are welcome to attend.

PLEASE NOTE: The 2015 State Convention will be held 9:30 a.m.

to 3 p.m. Saturday, March 14, at the Madison Banquet Room, 1125 SE Madison, Portland. Registration is \$12.50 which includes lunch. For additional information, please call 503-675-7764 or go to orara.org.

Electrical Workers 48

Retired Electricians of Local 48, wives and friends meet 11 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, at Kings Omelets, 10711 NE Weidler, Portland. For reservations and more information, please contact Glenn Hodgkinson at 503-656-0028.

Elevator Constructors 23

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11, at Hometown Buffet, 10542 SE Washington St., Portland.

Glass Workers 740

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 19, at Izzy's Pizza, 1307 NE 102nd Ave, Portland.

Insulators 36

Retiree breakfast 9 a.m. Thursday, March 5, at the Dockside Restaurant, 2047 NW Front Ave., Portland.

Iron Workers 29

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11, at the Union Hall

meeting room, 11620 NE Ainsworth Circle #200, Portland for a catered lunch.

Plumbers and Fitters 290

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 19, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Rusty Pipes meet 2 p.m. Thursday, March 5, at the Eugene Training Center.

Salem Retirees meet 12 noon Wednesday, March 11, at Almost Home Restaurant, 3310 Market St. NE., Salem.

Sheet Metal 16

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, at Sizzler's Restaurant, 3737 SE 82nd, Portland.

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\$500 million project at the Port of Portland

Propane terminal owner commits to build with union labor

Union construction workers are speaking out in support of a proposed propane export terminal at the Port of Portland.

Pembina Pipeline Co. of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, has an agreement with the Port to lease 60 acres near Terminal 6 on the Columbia River. The company has signed a letter of understanding with the Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council (CPBCTC) to build the \$500 million facility with a union workforce. The project is expected to generate between 600 to 800 construction jobs over two years.

Pembina says once completed, the terminal will support 35 to 40 permanent jobs. That employment is valued at approximately \$7.2 million in wages and benefits annually. Additionally, an estimated \$3.3 million in annual tax revenues would go to the City of Portland, as well as \$2.4 million to Multnomah County and \$3.1 million to Portland Public Schools annually.

The Oregon AFL-CIO is at-

tempting to meet with Pembina to secure a neutrality agreement for organizing the full-time workers once the terminal is operating.

"It is one of the largest single private capital investments in the city's history. There are no taxpayer dollars being used whatsoever," said Willy Myers, executive secretary of the CPBCTC.

Myers was among more than two dozen union leaders and members to attend a Jan. 13 public hearing of the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission. The commission is considering a proposal to change the zoning code, which prohibits the piping of hazardous materials across an environmental overlay zone on the Columbia River. [Zoning codes allow for such pipelines at Port facilities on the Willamette

River.]

Pembina needs 2,500 feet of piping to load the propane from the holding tanks to the dock and onto ships headed to Asia. Approximately 40 feet of that pipe must cross over the environmental zone.

"After saying 'no' to coal and 'not now' to crude by rail, we are confident that we are saying 'yes' to the right partner at the right time."

— Port of Portland
Executive Director
Bill Wyatt

propane only.

A second public hearing is scheduled for March 17. The commission will then take its recommendation to Portland City Council, which has final say on the zoning change.

Pembina also needs to secure local, state and federal permits before breaking ground.

Environmentalists vowed to use the zoning change process to stop the project. Also opposing the project is the International Longshore and Warehouse Union. Local 8 President Mike Stanton testified before the Planning and Sustainability Commission on Jan. 13, saying the terminal will squeeze out rail capacity for other cargoes.

Port of Portland executive director Bill Wyatt says the Port has been "extremely discerning" when considering recent energy sector cargo opportunities.

"After saying 'no' to coal and 'not now' to crude by rail, we are confident that we are saying 'yes' to the right partner at the right time," he said.

Wyatt said propane has an excellent track record as a clean and safe alternative fuel, "and I am impressed by the level of experience, expertise and commitment to safety that Pembina brings to the table.

"We already handle exports of potash and wheat from Canada, and we're excited to

serve as the gateway for this new cargo type from our neighbors to the north," Wyatt said.

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales welcomed the announcement of a half-billion-dollar investment in Portland and the jobs it will create.

"The city is committed to growing our economy on the land we already have, and holding industry to very high environmental and public safety standards. This proposal meets these goals," he said.

Pembina's overall plan is to build a rail yard with propane unloading equipment; eight transloading holding tanks to receive propane; refrigeration equipment; two large, refrigerated propane storage tanks capable of holding up to 800,000 barrels (approximately 33.6 million gallons); facility piping connecting the equipment; a control center, warehouse and maintenance facilities.

It wants to break ground by mid-2016 and have the terminal up and running by early 2018.



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...Congress makes big change to law on union pensions

From Page 1

vote no, the U.S. Treasury Department can override that vote and approve the cuts if the plan's insolvency would increase the PBGC's projected liabilities by \$1 billion or more.

The 161-page law making the changes is titled the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act of 2014, but it didn't go through the normal legislative process of hearings and committee votes. Instead, it was passed, with almost no debate, as an amendment in the House Rules Committee to a bill to continue funding for the federal government.

The Multiemployer Pension Reform Act was crafted largely along the lines of a proposal called "Solutions Not Bailouts," which was developed by a task force formed by the National Coordinating Committee on Multiemployer Plans. NCCMP, with offices at the AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington, D.C., is a kind of trade association for union benefit funds. But not all unions agreed with the legislation. The proposal was supported by the AFL-CIO Building & Construction Trades Department, Service Employees International Union, the Carpenters Union, United Food and Commercial Workers, United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters, Operating Engineers, and the Painters, and by union employers like Associated General Contractors and Kroger. But it was opposed by the Machinists, United Steelworkers, United Auto Workers,

Teamsters, and Boilermakers, and by AARP and the nonprofit Pension Rights Center.

"It's a breach of faith," says Karen Friedman, policy director for the Pension Rights Center. The Pension Rights Center, an advocacy group funded by foundations and individual donations, assembled an informal coalition with AARP and unions opposed to the Solutions Not Bailouts proposal.

"We're breaking a fundamental tenet in our federal pension law that has been there for 40 years: You do not take benefits away from people that are already retired," she said.

"When Congress passed ERISA 40 years ago, its principal aim was to put an end to disappointed pension expectations, to put an end to broken promises," Friedman told the Labor Press. The 1974 law she refers to — the Employee Retirement Income Security Act — created the PBGC, and regulated benefit plans to make sure they invested prudently and treated participants fairly. It also barred the plans from renegeing on promised benefits.



"We're breaking a fundamental tenet in our federal pension law that has been there for 40 years: You do not take benefits away from people that are already retired."

— Karen Friedman,
Pension Rights Center

NCCMP executive director Randy DeFrehn says the Solutions Not Bailouts proposal wasn't ideal: It came about after other proposed solutions got nowhere in Congress, and after a Republican House committee chair declared, in effect, that union pension funds would have

to solve their own problems, and would not get any bailout from taxpayers.

DeFrehn has said previously that if no changes were made, pensions in troubled plans would be cut; it was only a question of when. The thinking of the NCCMP, therefore, was that if smaller cuts spread across the board could — as a last resort — preserve a pension plan for the long run, it would be better than to wait until the plan was insolvent, at which time the PBGC would inflict maximum cuts to everyone.

Union multi-employer benefit plans, by law, are overseen by an equal number of trustees appointed by the union and participating employers. Trustees have a fiduciary duty to serve only the well-being of the beneficiaries, not that of the union or contributing employers. But severe distress among some multiemployer retirement plans has made it more murky how to interpret that legal obligation.

The beauty of the multiemployer model is that small employers can provide a generous benefit at a relatively low ad-

ministrative cost. It works particularly well in industries like construction, where workers may go from project to project and from employer to employer, yet have each employer make a contribution to their benefits. Multiemployer plans work because they pool funds from many employers. They're all in it together, and in general, multi employer plans have proven much more stable than pension plans sponsored by single employers. But when the plans get into serious trouble, they run the risk of all going down together. To make up for losses, participating employers are made to pay heavy surcharges. That can lead to a vicious cycle, because new employers are reluctant to join the plan, and the heavy surcharges make participating employers less competitive with nonunion firms; they lose business, and thus contribute less to the plan, or they even go under.

Some union plans in the construction industry got into trouble because they were hit with a double whammy: Their assets lost value in the stock market at

Turn to Page 9

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CONSTRUCTION: Not just for boys

Girls-only after-school Construction Clubs have begun cropping up in Portland high schools, under a project of non-profit Oregon Tradeswomen Inc. known as Building Girls. The group's mission is to increase the participation of women in high-wage high-skill building, mechanical, electrical, utility, and highway construction trades careers.

The clubs, led by volunteer tradeswomen, meet weekly. Participants get pizza, cookies, and hands-on lessons on how to safely use power tools. The first club drew a dozen girls at Wilson High School for 12 weeks starting in October. The girls also visited a furniture maker, and made wooden toys which they donated to Raphael House, a shelter for victims of domestic violence.

The second club began Jan. 27 at Benson High School and will run eight weeks. Building Girls program manager Katie Yablonski is in talks with several other Portland-area high schools about expanding the program.

"The intent is to get young women interested in work they may have seen as something just for the boys," says Oregon Tradeswomen communications manager Mary Ann Naylor.

Building Girls is also offering a summer day camp for middle school and high school girls, and a four-week work crew for girls and young women 17 to 24 years old who are interested in a career in construction, in which they earn a small



Adit, a student at Wilson High School, learns from Building Girls volunteer Kaeli Casati, an employee of residential remodeling firm Environs. (Photo by Katie Yablonski, courtesy of Oregon Tradeswomen Inc.)

stipend while learning basic construction skills and visiting apprenticeship training centers.

Naylor said the Building Girls program will serve more than 1,600 girls this year.

ONLINE EXTRA

To find out more, or to apply online for the girls summer day camp, visit <http://www.tradeswomen.net/building-girls/>

...Pension reform

From Page 8

the same time that members were thrown out of work in the downturn, meaning fewer employers were contributing to make up the losses. Other union plans are suffering from long-term declines in union employment in their industries, which have made the plans top-heavy: They may have more retirees collecting benefits than active workers bringing in contributions.

Though many multiemployer plans are considered underfunded, most are expected to recover, and only a small fraction are projected to become insolvent — maybe 100 out of about 1,500 multiemployer pension plans total. It's those failing plans, which account for over a million workers and retirees, which might make use of the new law to cut benefits if that can prevent insolvency.

Before the law passed in December, failing plans were required to spend down their assets paying current retirees every dollar they were promised. The plans would then get money from the PBGC to pay retirees under a reduced benefit formula. The formula guarantees 100 percent of the first \$11 (per year of service) of a participant's monthly benefit rate, plus 75 percent of the next \$33. That's the formula that generates the \$1,072.50 monthly maximum for a worker who retires after 30 years of service.

To shore up multiemployer

pension plans, the new law makes other changes besides allowing benefit cuts. It doubles the insurance premium plans pay to the PBGC (to \$26 per member per year). And it makes it easier for plans to merge with other plans. It also allows plans to divide, carving out "orphaned" participants (workers whose employer went bankrupt or left the plan) into plans that would fail and then get the insurance benefit, rather than taking down the whole plan.

But Friedman, the Pension Rights Center director, says there were other solutions besides cutting promised benefits. For instance, Congress could have increased the PBGC premium much more, say to \$120 per member per year, to prepare for a wave of defaults. She said her organization will try to repeal the new law.

NCCMP, for its part, will push Congress to enact another part of its Solutions Not Bailouts proposal: allowing a new kind of hybrid retirement plan that would combine the guarantees of the traditional defined benefit pension with the reduced employer investment risk of the newer defined contribution pension plans commonly known as 401(k)s. NCCMP's proposed "target benefit" plan would guarantee a minimum benefit based on conservative assumptions about investment return, while aiming for returns that would provide benefits above that amount.

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How Portland-area growth management may be keeping unions strong

By Greg LeRoy

Editor's note: Greg LeRoy, executive director of Good Jobs First, is a national expert on corporate tax breaks, and an advocate for making economic development subsidies more accountable and effective. On Jan. 13, he published an article in Shelterforce, the publication of the National Housing Institute, arguing that urban density may actually contribute to union density. The article looks at Atlanta, Denver, and Portland. The Portland section draws on the insights of Bob Shiprack, former executive secretary-treasurer of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council, and is excerpted below, with permission. You can see the complete article online at <http://bit.ly/1Bq4oYF>

Touring Portland with Bob Shiprack in his pickup is like taking a class in labor and land use all at once. He's the immediate past president of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council, an electrician by trade, and a retired state senator.

Shiprack draws a direct connection between Oregon's Urban Growth Boundary legislation and the building trades' resurgence there. Shiprack recalls how when he was young, Portland's downtown suffered

vacancies and abandonment. The trades grew weak as construction work in developing suburbs favored anti-union contractors. That all changed after the late 1970s, when the state enacted a statewide land use planning law, requiring every city or town to designate an Urban Growth Boundary, or UGB, outside of which farms and open space would be preserved. Today, 240 urban areas in Oregon have UGBs preserving rural lands while providing for gradual, well-planned growth.

The Portland UGB forced development away from the fringes and back downtown and into other neglected areas. The trades had strength from the mostly local contractors who won the work, and the urban work was more labor intensive than the sprawl: It was more vertical and often meant redevelopment (i.e., demolition before construction or gutting before rehabilitation) rather than new construction.

Portland-area residents reinforced the UGB benefits with smart regional planning and transit reforms. In 1979, they voted to create a three-county metropolitan planning organization (Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties). "Metro" serves 25 cities with 1.5 million residents and is the only organization of its kind in

the United States with directly elected leaders. Metro elections help educate voters about regionalism. And Metro is a model of how to avoid "fractured governance," a root cause of sprawl. (The Chicago metro area, by contrast, has 1,250 local taxing bodies and sprawling, tax-base chaos.)

As downtown Portland recovered, the trades deployed their own workers' capital. Areas like the Brewery Block and South Waterfront were jumpstarted with construction financing and equity investments from the trades' pension funds. National vehicles such as the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust and Building Investment Trust, J for Jobs, and the Union Labor Life Insurance Company also invested, always stipulating that construction be 100 percent union.

Over time, almost half a billion dollars of Oregon building trades' pension assets were invested in the Portland area, Shiprack explains, creating a virtuous cycle of good construction jobs generating retirement contributions, which in turn financed more construction. The pension funds still own numerous buildings in Portland, generating solid returns for retirement income as real estate rents and values appreciated thanks to Oregon's UGB policy.

Portland also benefited from the region's unified transit agency, TriMet, which was created to take over the service of five private bus companies in 1969. With the UGB creating higher population density, transit service became better-used and TriMet added four light rail lines, a commuter rail line, a trolley and downtown streetcar. Constructing this public infrastructure was mostly unionized, prevailing wage work.

But resurgent private construction is what really drove the trades' recovery. More transit service begat more transit-oriented development, and the trades organized most of it. As the trades have in a handful of states, Shiprack's member

unions won the extension of prevailing wage coverage to private construction when it was subsidized by tax increment financing, or TIF, first in Portland then in state statute.

"It was contentious at first with the mayor," Shiprack recalls, "but we wanted all the jobs to be good jobs."

Combining all these policies, the trades in Portland regained high density. The most recent survey for non-residential construction work in the three-county metro area found 59 percent being performed union, with more specialized crafts such as sheet metal workers (70 percent), plumbers and pipefitters (77 percent) and electricians (83 percent) even higher.

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Opening Doors - Impacting Lives...



Klamath Falls Walmart fires worker who went on strike

By Don McIntosh
Associate Editor

A Klamath Falls Walmart store has fired one of the three workers who took part in a late November protest strike.

Ismael Nuñez, along with his wife Jennifer Sanchez, took part in the nationwide walkout, and traveled to take part in rallies in Klamath Falls, Medford, and Portland. The strike was called by the group Organization United for Respect at Walmart (OUR Walmart) to protest cases of retaliation by Walmart against workers who spoke out about pay and working conditions. Now Nuñez may be one of those workers.

Nuñez says he was restocking frozen food Jan. 16 when his manager told him to go home, saying he hadn't been working hard enough. With half an hour left until the end of his nine-hour graveyard shift, Nuñez stayed working, and police were called to escort him out. [This is the same Walmart where in Decem-



Walmart workers Ismael Nuñez and his wife Jennifer Sanchez, take part in a Black Friday rally Nov. 29 outside a Southeast Portland Walmart. Six weeks later, Nuñez was suspended and terminated on what he says were phony accusations.

ber a manager threatened to call police after ordering a group of several dozen high school Christmas carolers to leave the store.]

Nuñez called in later in the day, and was told he was suspended without pay pending an investigation by the store manager Kelly Cooper. He says he was given few details of anything he'd done wrong, except for an accusation that he left a pallet of eggs unrefrigerated for two hours on Jan. 4. Nuñez denies it, and says it was more like

20 minutes. [Memo to Walmart: In many countries, eggs are sold unrefrigerated, and they can sit out for days without risk to human health.]

It's unclear what kind of investigation Cooper conducted, and she did not respond to a call from the Labor Press. But on Jan. 26, Nuñez was terminated from his \$15.42-an-hour job as an overnight frozen and dairy stocker — after 11 years as a Walmart employee.

"They fired me unjustly," Nuñez says. "They should stop

treating their employees that way. And stop calling the police on their employees."

Sanchez says police were also called when she tried to collect signatures on a petition.

Nuñez has applied for unemployment insurance compensation, and says he plans to file charges with the National Labor Relations Board. It's illegal to fire a worker for supporting union efforts or taking part in

"protected, concerted activity" with co-workers.

"A lot of people just move on and try to get another job," says Sanchez. "We're going to try to fight it."

Southern Oregon Jobs with Justice and Portland Jobs with Justice are appealing to supporters to call Klamath Falls Walmart manager Kelly Cooper at 541-885-6890 and tell her to put Ismael back to work.

IN MEMORIAM

JOHN C. WAGONER

July 3, 1946 - Nov. 24, 2014

John C. Wagoner, a retired member of Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers, died Nov. 24 at the age of 68. A medical examiner determined that he died of accidental drowning.

Wagoner was born in Vancouver, Washington and lived his whole life in the Camas and Washougal area. He served in the U.S. Army from 1965 to 1971. He worked at the Camas paper mill 38 years, until retiring. He was active in AWPPW, and served as area lobbyist for the union's Washington/Alaska Area Council. He also produced a newsletter called "Politics for

Workers." He was active the local group Concerned Citizens in Action.

Wagoner is survived by his wife Penny, daughter Taletha, a grandson, and brothers, nephews and nieces.

A celebration of life was held Dec. 5 at the AWPPW Local 5 union hall in Camas, accompanied by the American Legion Cape Horn Honor Guard and the Patriot Guard Riders.

Wagoner was an avid motorcyclist and yachtsman, and lived on a boat. Friends are collecting contributions at Riverview Community Bank in Camas for a memorial in his name to be placed at the Port of Camas Washougal Marina.



ONLINE EXTRA

Ismael Nuñez has begun an online petition urging Walmart to rehire him. That's at <https://www.coworker.org/petitions/walmart-stop-retaliate-against-walmart-workers?>

...Unions rally for \$15 minimum wage

From Page 1

counties in Oregon from raising the minimum wage locally.

The Legislature convened Feb. 2 and will be in session for 160 days.

"Almost half a million Oregonians work for \$12 an hour or less," Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain told the Salem crowd. "In other words, 1-in-4 Oregon workers are working as hard as they can and still live in poverty. That is shameful."

The state labor federation says that large low-wage employers aren't paying their fair share and, as a result, taxpayers are picking up the tab. Each year, Chamberlain said Oregonians spend \$1.7 billion in taxes to subsidize low-income wages along with irregular work schedules and inadequate benefits. Meanwhile, the companies employing low-wage workers (companies like Walmart, and McDonalds) are bringing in record profits.

"This is wrong. Corporate

greed will destroy our state, our nation, our communities, and our families," Chamberlain said. "It is time to hold them accountable. It is time for the Oregon Legislature to pass a minimum wage that lifts workers out of poverty, not one that drives them into it."

Tim Stoelb, president of the Oregon School Employees Association, called on the Legislature to "outlaw poverty" by passing a \$15 per hour minimum wage. "There are 200,000 reasons — that's the number of Oregon children who live in households below the federal poverty line," Stoelb said.

After rallying on the steps of the State Capitol, supporters marched through the streets of Salem to share their message.

Some of the labor organizations at the event were: Oregon School Employees Association; American Federation of Teachers; Portland Association of Teachers; Laborers Local 483; Oregon Education Association; Service Employees Locals 49



Workers hold up signs in support of raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour during a rally Saturday, Jan. 24, at the Oregon State Capitol in Salem.

and 503; AFSCME Locals 88 and 328; the Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals Local 5017; Amalgamated

Transit Union Local 757; IBEW Local 48; Communications Workers Local 7901; Musicians Local 99; International Long-

shore and Warehouse Union; Teamsters; and the Northwest Oregon, and Marion, Polk, Yamhill labor councils.



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