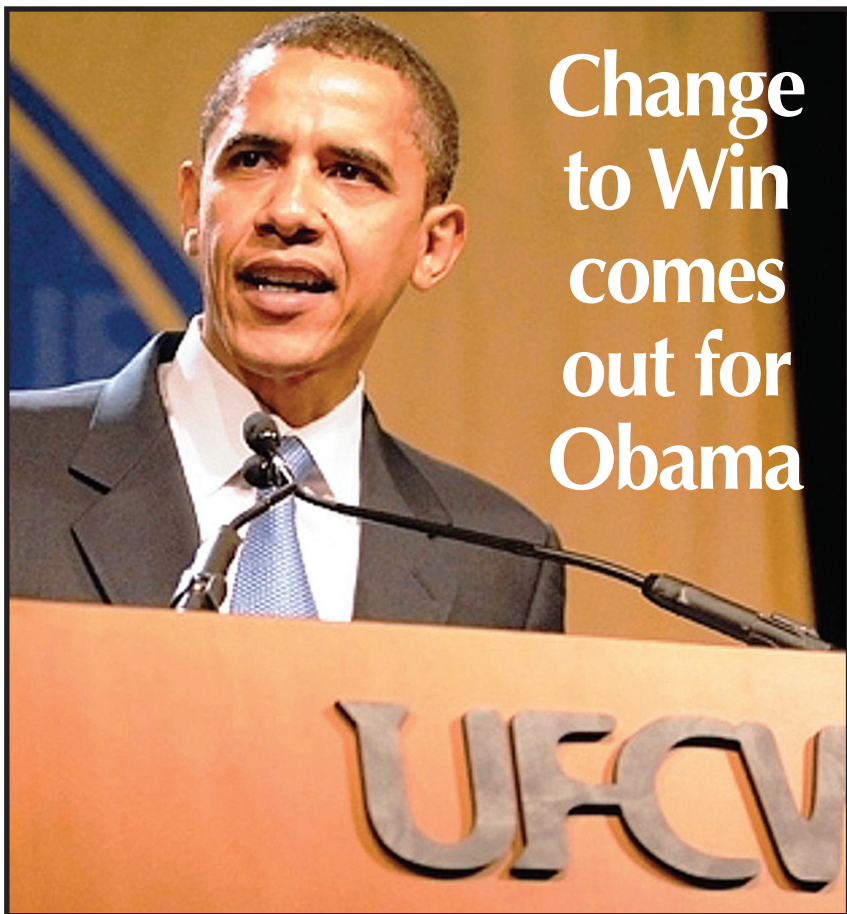




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PortlandChange  
to Win  
comes  
out for  
Obama

Democrat presidential hopeful Sen. Barrack Obama spoke at a UFCW conference in Chicago last year. Last month he won the endorsement of that union, along with the Service Employees, Teamsters, UNITE HERE, and the Change to Win federation.

## Four large CTW unions say his vision to restore America resonates with members

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI)—Saying his message of changing hope into reality has inspired its members across the country, and that it's time for the Democratic presidential nomination race to end, the Change to Win labor federation on Feb. 21 endorsed Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.) for president.

"One reason we endorsed now is because we think we can make a difference," said CTW Chairwoman Anna Burger. "It's time to bring this process to a close. There's a movement building here, and winds of change are blowing for Barack Obama."

The Change to Win endorsement came just weeks before March 4 primaries in Texas, Ohio, and Rhode Island, where a large number of delegates are up for grabs. [The outcome of those primaries was not available at press time on March 4.]

Obama is in a close Democratic primary race with Sen. Hillary Clinton of New York. Clinton — who is endorsed by several large unions affiliated with AFL-CIO — had been the front-runner until mid-February, when Obama went on a tear and won 11 states. Prior to March 4, Obama had won 26 primaries to Clinton's 11 and held a delegate lead of 1,202 to 1,042.

The seven unions in the Change to Win federation broke from the AFL-CIO in 2005 over internal disagreements about organizing and political activity. The national AFL-CIO has remained neutral in the primaries.

The immediate practical effect of the Change to

Win endorsement was to have four of the federation's largest unions — the Service Employees, United Food and Commercial Workers, the Teamsters, and UNITE HERE — join forces to mobilize their members in phone-calling, leafleting, door-knocking and other campaign activities in Ohio and Texas.

Burger said CTW unions have 175,000 members in Ohio and 60,000 members in Texas.

Two other CTW affiliates, the Laborers and Carpenters, have yet to finish their internal canvassing of members. The Carpenters initially endorsed John Edwards, who dropped out earlier this year. The seventh CTW union, the United Farm Workers, is supporting Clinton.

Burger said Obama's stands on trade, on achieving the American Dream and on the war in Iraq "really resonated with our members."

"NAFTA passed when Bill Clinton (Hillary's husband) was president," Burger continued referring to the controversial U.S.-Canada-Mexico free trade treaty that labor fought, arguing it would cost thousands of jobs.

"We have seen and lived through the impact of bad trade policies on working families in this country," Burger added.

Obama has told union audiences repeatedly that if elected, he would tell the Mexican president and the Canadian prime minister that NAFTA must be renegotiated to stop the job losses.

## Postal Workers Union claims USPS in Portland is re-routing mail around anthrax-sniffing machines

By DON McINTOSH  
Associate Editor

Six years after letters containing anthrax killed two Washington, D.C., postal workers, several complaints filed by union workers in Portland suggest caution may be waning at the U.S. Postal Service (USPS).

In December, to deal with a heightened volume of letters, Portland's central post office processed some letters without using machines that were installed to detect anthrax.

That spurred members of Portland-based American Postal Workers Union Local 128 to file a union contract grievance, a complaint with the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and a report to the USPS postal inspectors.

The anthrax scare started a week after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, when letters containing anthrax spores were sent to at least five major news organizations; three weeks later, letters containing a more refined version of anthrax were sent to

two U.S. senators. At least 22 people developed anthrax infections, and five of those died, including two APWU members at the Brentwood postal facility in Washington, D.C. Anthrax is a not-uncommon livestock disease, but particular strains of the bacteria that cause it have been developed for use as biological weapons.

In the wake of the attacks, Congress appropriated \$1.4 billion to protect the mail by buying and installing "biohazard detection systems" in USPS facilities. By late last year, the systems, manufactured and maintained by Northrop Grumman, had been installed at all 283 major USPS processing facilities.

The systems are set up to catch anthrax in stamped letters collected from postal boxes or home mailboxes — not commercial mass mailings, which are the bulk of USPS workload. Anthrax-sniffing machines are integrated into USPS' high speed letter-cancelling equipment. A vacuum takes an air sample from a batch of letters, which is then tested by DNA analysis to look for anthrax. It takes 30 to 45 minutes to get the test

result. If any of the machines ever detect anthrax, an alarm is supposed to go off, and postal workers have been trained to follow procedures to contain the batch and evacuate the building.

That's where mail processing clerk Roseanna Foster-Mikhail comes in. Foster-Mikhail, a 22-year postal employee, is Local 128's safety and health representative, and the person responsible for biohazard training for local postal employees. Her union's members maintain the machine, though another union, the Laborers-affiliated National Postal Mail Handlers Union, represents workers who use the machine.

The Portland post office has eight of the high-tech cancellation machines, each capable of scanning and stamping the cancellation mark on 30,000 pieces of mail per hour. But even that's not enough around holidays like Christmas, when letter volumes soar — from 1.5 million pieces a night to as much as 3 million pieces, according to L.C. Hansen, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 82.

(Turn to Page 8)

# Special legislative session gavels to a close

## No major union-related bills are heard during the three-week experiment

SALEM — The Oregon Legislature's first-ever experiment with an annual session wrapped up Feb. 22. No major union-related bills were debated during the three-week session, but labor organizations took sides in favor of a handful of bills. And not many of those passed, despite Democratic leadership of the Oregon House, Oregon Senate and governor's office.

The top priority of the Oregon AFL-CIO was a package of mortgage reforms supported by a consumer coalition that included AARP, OSP-PIRG, and the union-backed group Our Oregon. State Senator Ben Westlund (D-Tupelo) led the campaign, introducing a bill that contained six proposals to protect borrowers from onerous mortgage lending practices. But the mortgage industry mounted fierce opposition, and four of the six were amended out of the bill.

On the House side, Speaker Jeff Merkely (D-Portland) backed the stripped-down bill, and managed to get it passed by a single vote. Three Democratic House members voted against the bill — Larry Galizio of Tigard, Deborah Boone of Cannon Beach, and Mike Schaufler of Happy Valley. But Merkely was also able to get three Republicans to vote for it —

John Lim of R-Gresham, Donna Nelson of McMinnville, and Bill Garrard of Klamath Falls. In the end, it didn't matter: Senate leaders Peter Courtney (D-Salem) and Richard Devlin (D-Tualatin) refused to give the bill a vote, saying it wouldn't pass, even though Democrats controlled 18 of 30 seats in the Senate.

"The industry was lobbying from day one to stop any lending reform from moving forward," said Angela Martin, Economic Fairness Coalition Director for Our Oregon.

The mortgage reform proposals will likely be back for debate next year, when the next Legislature meets in January.

"We will see more pain in the mortgage lending arena for homeowners," Martin said. "The banking community has gone way overboard with excessive fees and abusive contract terms, and it's eating into the pockets of too many working families."

Two mortgage reform bills did pass, however — bills that were supported by a gubernatorial task force heavy with mortgage industry representatives. One will limit "rescue mortgage" scams that prey on borrowers in foreclosure; the other will require mortgage bankers and brokers

to file an annual report about their activities.

Supporters of a union-backed third party, the Oregon Working Families Party (OWFP), were disappointed again when their proposal to restore "fusion" voting failed. Fusion, which exists in several other states, allows candidates to be listed on ballots as the nominee of more than one political party. OWFP has ballot status as a minor party in Oregon, but hasn't yet run candidates for fear of the "spoiler" effect, in which voting for a third-party candidate helps elect the less appealing major party candidate. Instead OWFP has focused on restoring fusion, which Oregon once had. Passing fusion would breathe life into a party like OWFP, enabling workers to vote on the ballot line of a party that sticks to bread-and-butter economic issues and avoids divisive social issues.

Last year, OWFP tried and failed to win passage of a fusion bill in the Legislature's regular session. In February, OWFP went to work again on state lawmakers with the help of a paid organizer and two contract lobbyists. They managed to get commitments of support from a majority in each chamber, said party co-chair Barbara Dudley — including numer-

ous Republicans, who believe fusion would lessen the spoiler effect of conservative third parties like the Libertarians. But the bill died in the Ways and Means Committee, because Senate Democratic leaders, including Senate President Peter Courtney, refused to give the bill a vote. Dudley credits three Democratic lawmakers in particular as having fought for the bill: state senators Brad Avakian and Ben Westlund, and state representative Chip Shields. OWFP leaders plan to meet soon to consider options, which include a ballot initiative for 2008 or 2010, another try at the Legislature in 2009, and a third, unnamed option.

On the issue of health care, several union groups backed a proposal for additional money to expand the rolls of poor children on the Oregon Health Plan. Right now the kids are dropped from the rolls if they don't reapply every six months; the bill would have given them at least a year's worth of health coverage once they qualify. But a scaled-back state budget forecast drove a nail into the coffin of that idea, said AFL-CIO president Tom Chamberlain.

Behind the scenes, there was also talk of adding a representative of or-

ganized labor to the governor-appointed Global Warming Commission. But that went nowhere.

A bright spot for labor was a bill to require energy conservation improvements in state buildings, sponsored by Brad Witt (D-Clatskanie), former secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO and a union rep for United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555. Witt sponsored a similar bill last year, which failed to pass. This time, an amended version passed with a unanimous vote in the Oregon House, and all but one vote in the Oregon Senate. The bill could result in thousands of jobs for union building trades workers.

Witt also was able to get \$500,000 appropriated to a revolving loan fund for reconstruction efforts in communities like Vernonia that were hit hard by last year's severe storms.

AFSCME, one of the larger public employee unions, helped pass a bill aimed at heading off a major budget threat. Lawmakers voted to refer to voters a bill to provide drug treatment and longer prison sentences for repeat offenders committing property crimes. The legislature's proposal is put forth as an alternative to a much more expensive ballot measure authored by Kevin Mannix that would require mandatory minimum sentences for property crimes and identity theft, even for first time offenders whose crimes were committed to feed drug habits. The way the referral is written, if voters approve it, it will invalidate the Mannix measure.

Alltold, AFL-CIO President Chamberlain termed it a successful legislative session, which passed consensus bills and ended short and under budget.

"Could they have done more? Of course they could have," Chamberlain said. "We didn't bring forward groundbreaking legislation because we didn't have time to build support for that."

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# Trades charter school will open this fall

A new charter school in East Multnomah County is partnering with apprenticeship training programs to offer classes focusing on construction trades, engineering and architecture.

The Academy for Architecture, Construction and Engineering (ACE) will open its doors in September to 250 high school juniors. Enrollment could double the following year when both juniors and seniors will attend.

The academy will operate out of the Willamette Carpenters Training Center, 4222 NE 158th Ave., Portland.

ACE is the brainchild of the Oregon Building Congress, an organization that for years has brought together teachers, businesses, public agencies and training programs to increase the quality and diversity of applicants entering the building industry.

OBC has partnered with Reynolds, Centennial, Parkrose and Gresham-Barlow school districts, and five apprenticeship training programs — WCTC, the NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center, the HVAC & Metals

Institute of Sheet Metal Workers Local 16, the Northwest Laborers-Employers Training Trust, and the open shop Northwest College of Construction — to create the new school.

Reynolds School District is the actual sponsor of the charter. Charter schools are independently run, but publicly funded. ACE has its own board of directors who formulate policies, curriculum and budgets. Among the board members is Ken Fry, director of the NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center.

John Steffens, director of the Willamette Carpenters Training Center (and vice president of OBC), and Ric Olander, president of Sheet Metal Workers Local 16, also serve on committees that will hire teachers and establish the curriculum at ACE.

Students will follow A Day/B Day schedules, receiving core classes at their home schools on on day, then attending the academy the next. The two-year program will offer graduation credits in math, science and Eng-

lish, as well as opportunities to intern and job shadow. All juniors will take construction courses to learn the basics. As seniors, they can specialize in architecture, engineering or one of the trades.

"This is project-based learning. Students won't be sitting around at a table. They will be learning by doing," Dick O'Connor, executive director of OBC told the NW Labor Press.

Students will be organized into small "work crews," with four or five crews creating a learning group. Two learning groups will be anchored to a certified teacher and a technical education instructor.

O'Connor said 140 applicants have applied for the six teaching posts. ACE faculty will consist of a state certified teachers for math, science and English, plus three instructors with skills in either construction, architecture or engineering.

"We should be able to hire some fabulous teachers," O'Connor said.

At an open house for students and parents last month, Mike Taylor, a retired superintendent from Parkrose High School and the newly-hired principal of ACE, said that in addition to the teachers, students will have access to the training centers.

"These are state-of-the-art facilities with top-notch computer labs and CAD labs," Taylor said. "The HVAC Institute has some of the best math art on its walls that I've ever seen. It's a wonderful facility."

"This is a resource I guarantee you no other school can provide," he said.

A trades charter school has been in

the works for several years.

"We sat down with industry and educators, shared our ideas and desires, and found we could really help each other by building this school," O'Connor said. "The collaboration on



this has been phenomenal."

Fry, a past president of OBC, said that in 2006 the organization presented its plan to Portland Public Schools, but was turned down ... twice.

OBC then took its proposal to school districts in East Multnomah County, where poverty rates are high and schools are busting at the seams. "The reception there was quite different," Fry said.

Reynolds School District Superintendent Terry Kneisler was eager to listen, Fry said. Meetings were arranged with administrators from other school districts in the area, and the result is the new charter school.

"My initial reaction was, 'someone pinch me, I can't believe this is finally happening,'" Steffens told the NW Labor Press.

ACE is leasing space for three years from the Willamette Carpenters Training Center, which is located in the Reynolds School District. If all goes as planned and it performs to state standards, ACE can apply for another five-year grant.

The Willamette Carpenters Training Center has remodeled about 7,000 square feet of its second floor to accommodate students this fall. It is already talking about adding six more classrooms, a library, new restrooms

and a meeting hall with a serving kitchen that can seat up to 200 people.

Applications to ACE are available at high school counseling offices. Each school is guaranteed placing a certain number of students based on its enrollment. If schools don't fill their slots by March 15 they will be redistributed. If there are more applicants than space, students will be selected by lottery. The only requirement is that applicants be a junior with at least a 2.0 grade point average.

"This is not an experiment," Taylor said at the open house. "Everything has been demonstrated to be an acceptable practice. We'll do what we do extremely well."

*Editor's Note:* ACE Academy is modeled after the Center for Advanced Learning, another charter school in East Multnomah County. CAL focuses on health care, manufacturing technology and engineering. It is in the Gresham school district.

OBC's Dick O'Connor said talks are ongoing with the affiliated training programs and the state apprenticeship office as to whether ACE grads will be allowed direct entry into training programs.

"Our hope is to provide direct entry. But it's not official yet," said John Steffens, director of the Willamette Carpenters Training Center.

Ken Fry of the NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center and Ric Olander of the HVAC & Metals Institute told the NW Labor Press that graduates may not get direct entry into their programs, but they'll definitely have a leg up on other applicants.

"Entry is being discussed," Fry said. "It depends on the trade and what each training center wants to do."

Currently, graduates from Benson High School in Portland and from the Clark County Skills Center in Vancouver, Wash., can apply to the Electrical Training Center monthly, while others can apply only during open enrollment, which takes place twice a year.



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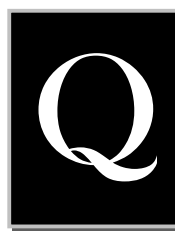
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# AFSCME #88 backs three in Multnomah Co. races

The union that represents most workers at Multnomah County announced Feb. 20 that it will back Deborah Kafoury, Rob Milesnick and Carla Piluso for three open seats on the non-partisan County Commission.

Multnomah County Employees Local 88, an affiliate of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) represents some 2,700 workers there. The county is responsible for jails, libraries, bridges and an array of social services for the aged, sick, disabled and mentally ill.

Local 88 is the largest of the eight unions representing county workers. Its three-step endorsement process includes written questionnaires from all candidates, interviews by the AFSCME Local 88 Political Action Committee, and participation in a Candidates' Forum. That forum — held at the general membership meeting Feb. 20 — allowed candidates to respond directly to

questions submitted by members.

"It's an exciting meeting. I love it because everybody is so involved," said union president Becky Steward.

Following the forum, members discuss and then vote on their endorsement selections.

Kafoury is a former House Democratic leader from Northeast Portland. She served as a state rep from 1999 to 2004. She graduated from Portland's Grant High School and received a bachelor's degree in English from Whitman College. Also running in District 1 are Wes Soderback and Mark Newey. Neither responded to AFSCME's questionnaire or invitation to the forum.

Rob Milesnick received a law degree from Syracuse University. He works as a lobbyist for ODS Health Plans. Prior to that he worked for the Oregon Judicial Department supervising DUII probationers in Multnomah

County. Also running for the seat in District 3 are Judy Shiprack, Mike Delman, Bruce Barclay and Roy Burkett. Burkett did not respond to the union's invite.

Carla Piluso has a 29-year career in law enforcement, including the last five years as chief of police for the City of Gresham. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science and speech from Willamette University. Her 95-year-old father was a longtime member

of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, and Piluso herself was a shop steward for the Teamsters. She has been with the police department for 29 years. Also running for the seat representing East Multnomah County are Diane McKeel and Ken Quinby.

The primary election is May 20. If no candidate gets 50 percent plus one, the top two vote-getters will face off in November.

## Gardner won't run for Congress; other candidates still deciding

Oregon Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner, a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48, has decided not to run for Congress this year.

Democratic U.S. Rep. Darlene Hooley announced Feb. 8 that she will not seek re-election to her seat in the 5th Congressional District.

Gardner discussed a possible run with political advisers and his family, and late last month announced he would not run, saying that spending time with his children would come first. Gardner has two-and-a-half more years to serve in his second term as labor commissioner.

Two other potential Democratic candidates also won't seek the job. They are Paul Evans and Brigadier General Mike Caldwell. Evans is an aide to Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski and spouse of Hooley's chief of staff. Caldwell is well-known by the building trades and in AFSCME circles at the Oregon Military Department.

Meanwhile, State Sen. Kurt Schrader (D-Canby) has thrown his hat into the ring in the Democratic primary, and former State Treasurer Jim Hill is rumored to be interested.

On the Republican side, Kevin Mannix and Mike Erickson are looking hard at the open seat. Mannix is a Democrat-turned-Republican state legislator who ran unsuccessfully for governor and attorney general. Erickson challenged Hooley two years ago — and lost by a sizable margin.

Only one Republican candidate had filed to run at press time. He is R.J. Wilson, a Salem dance instructor.

## SEIU Local 503 and 49 endorse Kroger for AG

Service Employees International Union Locals 503 and 49 have endorsed Democrat John Kroger for Oregon attorney general.

SEIU is Oregon's largest union, representing nearly 50,000 workers in the hospital systems, long-term care, property services and public-service sectors.

"We endorsed John Kroger because we need an attorney general who will stand up for the people of Oregon and John has a history of doing the people's work," said Kate Pingo, secretary-treasurer of Local 49.

SEIU joins Carpenters Union Locals 247 and 2154 of Portland and 1065 of Salem in supporting Kroger, along with former Gov. John Kitzhaber and City Commissioners Erik Sten, Dan Saltzman and Randy Leonard.

Kroger is a Lewis & Clark Law School professor and a former federal prosecutor, who says he will combat the state's meth crisis by pushing for tougher enforcement and treatment, will hold polluters accountable by imposing fines and jail time, and will fight for the civil rights of Oregonians by arguing those cases himself in court.

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# Trade unions want strong turn-out at Cascade Locks casino hearings

Public hearings in March will determine the fate of the Warm Springs Resort and Casino proposed at an industrial park 40 miles east of Portland in Cascade Locks.

The \$400 million project will be built all union under a project labor agreement with the Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council and Anderson Construction. The tribe also has a compact with the State of Oregon that would allow some 2,000 resort and casino workers to organize.

To develop the resort, the tribe needs permission from the federal government to buy 25 acres in the industrial park from the Port of Cascade Locks and convert it into tribal land. A draft environmental impact statement was released Feb. 15. The public has until May 15 to comment on it.

The Department of Interior, through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, will hold five public hearings before making a final decision, hopefully by the end of the year. The first meeting was held March

3 in Warm Springs. Future meetings will be held:

- Monday, March 10, Cascade Locks, Port Pavillion, 355 Wa-Na-Pa St.

- Wednesday, March 12, Stevenson, Wash., 710 S.W. Rock Creek Dr.

- Thursday, March 13, Portland, DoubleTree Hotel, 1000 NE Multnomah St.

- Monday, March 17, Hood River Middle School Auditorium, 1602 May St.

All meetings start at 6 p.m.

The proposal has support from building trades unions, Gov. Ted Kulongoski, the City of Cascade Locks and all the surrounding governments and communities.

"It's important that we turn out a lot of our members," said John Mohlis, executive secretary-treasurer of the CP-BCTC. "This is it. This is the time to make our voices heard."

In addition to public testimony, written comments can be sent to: Stanley Speaks, Northwest Regional Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs, 911 NE 11th Ave., Portland, OR 97232 or faxed to 503-231-2275, or go to [www.gorge-casino.com](http://www.gorge-casino.com) and click on the Comment Opportunities page.

# CWA Local 7901 endorses Steve Novick for U.S. Senate

Portland-based Communications Workers of American, Local 7901 has endorsed Steve Novick in the Oregon Democratic primary for U.S. Senate.

"Our members were looking for a fighter to stand up for worker's rights in the U.S. Senate, and all agreed that Steve is that candidate," said Local 7901 President Madelyn Elder. "We need someone who won't just vote the right way, but stand up as a tireless advocate for the working families of Oregon."

Local 7901 represents nearly 1,000 workers in the public and private sectors.

## Clackamas County Democrats will present anti-LNG resolution at March 20 meeting


Union backers for the development of liquefied natural gas plants in Oregon might want to attend the March 20 meeting of the Clackamas County Democrats, where party leaders have introduced a resolution opposing such construction.

Last month, a couple of union members were able to get the resolution tabled.

Proposed construction of an LNG plant at Bradwood Landing near Astoria has been endorsed by the Oregon AFL-CIO and the regional and state building trades councils.

"Their resolution against LNGs was filled with inaccuracies. We wanted more time so that we could tell our side of the story," said Willy Meyers, a business rep for Sheet Metal Workers Local 16.


The next meeting of the Clackamas County Democrats is Thursday, March 20, at 7:30 p.m. at the Operating Engineers Local 701 Union Hall, 555 First St., Gladstone. (Take the Gladstone exit off I-205).



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# Official Notices

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## Boilermakers 500

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## Laborers/Vancouver 335

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## Laborers 320

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## Lane, Coos, Curry & Douglas Building Trades

Delegates meet at noon Wednesday, March 26, at

the Springfield Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

## Linoleum Layers 1236

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 27, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

## Marion-Polk-Yamhill Labor Council

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, followed by a 7 p.m. general meeting at SEIU Local 503, 1730 Commercial St. SE, Salem.

## Metal Trades Council

Executive Board meets 8 a.m. Monday, March 10, at NOLC board room, 1125 SE Madison, Portland.  
Delegates meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

## Mid-Columbia Labor Council

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, at 3313 W. 2nd, The Dalles.

## Millwrights & Machinery Erectors 711

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, March 22, preceded by a 9 a.m. Executive Committee meeting, at the Carpenters Local 247 Hall, 2205 N. Lombard St., Portland.

## Molders 139

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 20, preceded by a 6 p.m. Executive Board meeting at the Carpenters Hall, 2205 N. Lombard, Portland.

## Northwest Oregon Labor Council

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Monday, March 24, at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

## Office & Professional Workers 11

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, at the Laborers/Teamster Hall, 2212 NE Andresen, Vancouver. Please Note: Nominations for the following offices will take place at this meeting: Executive Secretary (3 yr. term), Executive Board Utilities (2 yr. term), Executive Board Labor Orgs (2 yr. term), Executive Board At Large (2 yr. term), Executive Board Public Sector (2 yr. term), Executive Board At Large (unex-

pired term), Executive Board Public Sector (unexpired term) and Trustee (3 yr. term).

## Painters & Drywall Finishers 10

Members meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 19, at the Asbestos Hall, 11145 N.E. Sandy, Portland.

## Pile Drivers, Divers & Shipwrights 2416

Members meet 7 p.m. Friday, March 28, preceded by a 6 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 2205 N Lombard, Portland.

## Portland City & Metropolitan Employees 189

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, at 6025 E. Burnside, Portland.  
General membership meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, 6025 E. Burnside, Portland.

## Roofers & Waterproofers 49

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, March 13.  
Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, April 3.  
Meetings are at 5032 SE 26th Ave, Portland. (Phone: 503 232-4807)

## Salem Building Trades

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Thursday, April 3, at the IBEW 280 Training Center, 33309 Hwy. 99E, Tangent.

## Sheet Metal Workers 16

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland

Medford area members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 12, at Wild River Pizza, 2684 N. Pacific Hwy., Medford.

Eugene area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 13, at the Local 16 Hall, 4748 Franklin Blvd., Eugene.

Coos Bay area members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, March 20, at the Labor Temple, 3427 Ash St., North Bend.

Portland area VOC members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 2, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

## Sign Painters & Paint Makers 1094

Members meet 3:30 p.m. Monday, March 17, in the District Office, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

## Southern Oregon Central Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, at the Labor Temple, 4480 Rogue Valley Hwy. #3, Central Point.

## Southwestern Oregon Central Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Monday, March 3, at the Bay Area Labor Center, 3427 Ash, North Bend.

## United Association 290

Portland area members meet 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 21, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Astoria area members meet 6 pm Thursday, March 27, at the Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane St., Astoria.

Bend area members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, at the Local 290 Training Center, 2161 SW First, Redmond.

Brookings area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 1, at Curry County Search and Rescue, 417 Railroad St., Brookings.

Coos Bay area members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, at the Coos Bay Training Center, 2nd & Kruse, Coos Bay.

Eugene area members meet 6:30 p.m. Monday, March 24, at the Springfield Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

Klamath Falls area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, at 4816 S. 6th St., Klamath Falls.

Medford area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 27, at 650A Industrial Cir., White City.

Roseburg area members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, March 27, at 742 SE Roberts, Roseburg.

Salem area members meet 6 p.m. Monday, March 24, at 1810 Hawthorne Ave. NE, Salem.

The Dalles area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, at United Steelworkers Local 8170 Union Hall, The Dalles.

Humboldt-Del Norte Co. area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, at the Eureka Training Center, 832 E St., Eureka, Calif.

## USW 1097

Members meet 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 19, preceded by a 3 p.m. Executive Board meeting, in the union office building, 91237 Old Mill Town Rd., Westport.

## Tickets on sale for Share dinner and concert

VANCOUVER — Several labor unions are helping Share, a non-profit organization that provides shelter, food and emergency services for people in Southwest Washington, through sponsorships at its fundraising events.

Share is hosting the 7th annual Share-a-Bowl dinner and concert Sunday, April 27 at Skyview High School, 1300 NW 139th St.

The concert will feature Patrick Lamb, a member of Musicians Local 99, as well as Linda Hornbuckle, Norman Sylvester, Karen Therese and Michael Allen Harrison.

Plumbers and Fitters Local 290 and the Northwest Labor Press are among several co-sponsor of the concert.

Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$5 for kids 5 to 12.

For tickets or more information on sponsoring a Share event, call Becky at 360-887-8556 or log on to their Web site at [www.sharevancouver.org](http://www.sharevancouver.org).

## Retiree Meeting Notices

### ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS OREGON CHAPTER

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, March 20, in the Northwest Oregon Labor Council board room, at 1125 SE Madison, Portland. **PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE** for this month only.

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, March 27, at Westmoreland Union Manor, 6404 SE 23rd Ave., Portland. All retirees are welcome to attend.

### CARPENTERS

Retired Carpenters meet for an 11:30 a.m. tour and 12:30 luncheon Monday, March 10, at the Carpenter's Training Center, 4222 NE 158th, Portland. **PLEASE RSVP** to Leo Larsen at 503 666-1613.

### ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

All Retired Electricians of Local 48, wives and friends meet for lunch 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, March 11, at Hometown Buffet, 10542 SE Washington St., Portland. Senior lunch is \$7.39. A brief business

meeting will follow. Suggestions for trips are welcome. For further information, please call Vera Larson at 503 252-2296.

SAVE THE DATE: April 8 for a FREE luxury bus trip to Lucky Eagle Casino in Rochester, WA.

### IRON WORKERS 29

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 12, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

### ELECTRICAL WORKERS 280

Retirees meet between 11:45 a.m. and noon Monday, March 10, at The Old Country Buffet on Lancaster in Salem, which is next to Michael's Craft store.

If you have any questions, please give Don Ball a call at 541-327-3388.

### IRON WORKERS 29

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 12, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

# Union and political leaders propose labor-business alliance to rebuild nation's crumbling infrastructure

Citing crumbling bridges, roads, waterways, rails and ports, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney proposed labor and business form a joint alliance to push a comprehensive long-term plan to rebuild the nation's infrastructure.

Closing a national infrastructure conference at his alma mater, Iona College in New Rochelle, N.Y., on Feb. 19, Sweeney said he would be willing to set up such a joint alliance with the Chamber of Commerce, the National Associations of Manufacturers, and others.

If such a long-term rebuilding plan, with government-backed financing for projects, passed Congress and was signed by the next president, "managers of the \$5 trillion now in our union benefit funds (would) seriously consider infrastructure capital investments, and I know it would have the same effect on

private capital," Sweeney said.

"We all have a stake in this — every one of us — and we all have different motives for wanting action," Sweeney continued. "For the AFL-CIO, it's good jobs. For others, it is something different. We all depend on our infrastructure to keep our families and our communities healthy, comfortable and safe, and to keep our country moving. We should be able to put some of our parochial concerns aside and come together behind a comprehensive long-range infrastructure plan."

A day later in Portland, Oregon Congressman Earl Blumenauer, a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, met with a dozen construction union leaders to get their ideas on what a national plan to rebuild infrastructure might look like.

He told them he has been working with Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, (D-Calif.), and has talked to more than 240 stakeholders (a diverse group ranging from contractors and environmentalists to truckers and transit workers) to raise the profile for a national infrastructure plan.

"This is going to part of the Democratic program this year and next," he emphasized. "China is spending 9 percent of its gross domestic product on infrastructure. India is spending 4 percent of its GDP. The United States spent less than 1 percent. We are falling further and further behind our global competitors."

The Iona College conference was diverse, too, bringing together unions, business, government and academic leaders to explore the hows and whys of revitalizing the economy by rebuilding

its infrastructure.

"We know that investing in our own infrastructure will produce prosperity. It will put people to work . . . But there has to be a will to do this. It is hard work to build consensus," said Ron DeFeo, CEO of heavy equipment manufacturer Terex, Corp., which sponsored the conference.

The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that every \$1 billion invested in transportation infrastructure generates \$2 billion in economic activity. Most estimates also say that every billion dollars spent on infrastructure creates between 40,000 and 50,000 jobs.

"In simplistic terms, what we lack is any sort of long-range comprehensive plan — any sort of overall strategy" that would cover years of projects and billions of dollars in construction, Sweeney said.

But Sweeney insists it will take a new administration in Washington, D.C., before any significant action is taken, because for seven years the Bush Administration has refused to consider using infrastructure spending as a job-creation vehicle.

During last January's debate on a short-term economic stimulus package, the AFL-CIO urged Congress to include a job-creating infrastructure component, one aimed at bridge repair and school renovation. Bush and his allies in the Senate nixed it.

Sweeney did not offer a comprehensive plan himself, but said a good start would be bipartisan legislation pending in Congress — now marooned in the House Banking Committee — to "establish a National Infrastructure Bank to finance substantial infrastructure projects with public and private capital, above

and beyond existing grants and earmarks."

"The central idea behind such an approach is the financing would be guaranteed by our government," Sweeney said. "We'd be asking government, business, labor and individuals to invest in America, and in this time of economic uncertainty and national division, that would be a percentage play for all of us."

At both the Portland and New York gatherings, similar information was shared with participants. For example:

- The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates it will take \$1.6 trillion over five years to bring roads, rails, bridges, waterways, transit systems and other infrastructure components in to "good condition."

- A National Surface Transportation

Policy and Revenue Study calculates that it will take \$225 billion annually just to maintain the existing transportation system over the next 50 years.

- The Congressional Budget Office predicts a \$5 billion shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund by 2009, disrupting projects in all 50 states.

- By 2020, every major U.S. container port is projected to double its designed capacity. Some West Coast ports will quadruple.

There are 72,000 miles of sewer and water pipes that are over 80 years old.

"The infrastructure we built for the previous century is obsolete," Blumenauer said in Portland. "Today, we have a unique opportunity to rebuild our communities in ways that meet our environmental and energy challenges while revitalizing the economy."

## Annual Faith-Labor Breakfast set for Wednesday, March 12

The sixth annual Faith-Labor Breakfast will be held Wednesday, March 12, starting at 7:45 a.m. at Highland Christian Center, 7600 N.E. Glisan St., Portland.

The annual event is co-sponsored by the Portland Chapter of Jobs with Justice, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, the Northwest Oregon Labor Council and Oregon Farmworkers Ministries.

All clergy, lay leaders and trade unionists are invited to attend.

Cost for breakfast is \$7.  
For more information, call 503-236-5573.

## Grocery-meat workers wrap up more contracts

Members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 ratified several more contracts last month on the heels of a ratification vote in Eugene-Springfield after more than a year of bargaining.

In February, Salem, Corvallis, Albany, Sweet Home, Lebanon, and Newport all settled contracts. Support has averaged around 92 percent.

Local 555 represents more than 1,100 workers at Safeway, Albertsons and Fred Meyer stores in these areas.

Key provisions in the contracts are identical to those in Eugene-Springfield, with union workers winning hard-money wage increases (not bonuses in lieu of wages, as employ-

ers initially tried to get). Wages will increase \$1.30 an hour over the life of the agreement, retroactive to February 2007. There will be no health reimbursement accounts (which would have resulted in large increases in deductibles), and employees may volunteer to work Christmas Day, but can't be scheduled to work.

Ratification votes are scheduled this month in Vancouver, Wash., Medford, Roseburg, Coos Bay and Brookings.

Contracts in The Dalles and Hood River expire May 31. Contracts expire in Portland, Bend, and Newport July 26.

## Labor groups to participate in anti-war rally March 15

The war in Iraq will be five years old this month, and anti-war groups, with the support of labor organizations, are planning protest rallies around the country. In Portland, a march and rally is planned for March 15, starting at 2 p.m. at the South Park Blocks.

Oregon AFL-CIO president Tom Chamberlain will speak at the Portland rally, along with Barbara Dudley, co-chair of the labor-backed Oregon Working Families Party; Andrea Cano, director of the Oregon Farm Labor Ministry; plus an Iraqi national, an Iraqi war veteran, and the father of Ehren Watada, a U.S. Army lieutenant who refused deployment to Iraq.

The event has the endorsement of AFSCME Local 88, ILWU Local 5, Portland Jobs with Justice, and the Oregon AFL-CIO.

## Portland Public School bus drivers ratify contract

Union school bus drivers at Portland Public Schools ratified a new union contract Feb. 29, after more than two years of working without a contract. The group of 85 workers drive buses for special education students, and are represented by Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757.

The new contract runs through June 30, 2010 and is retroactive to Jan. 1, 2006. Drivers will get annual raises of 2.5 percent, including retroactive pay back to last July, and a flat \$625 for the 18 months before that. Under the previous contract, driver pay started at \$12.69 and rose to \$16.51 after 10 years.

The new contract also raises the district's capped contribution to health coverage by 6 percent a year starting Oct. 1. That's also when the new statewide school district employee health insurance pool comes into being, so there may be some reduction in the cost of coverage.

Under the new deal, the union agreed to give up employer-paid retiree health coverage after 2014. Currently the district pays for it for to five years or until the retiree is eligible for Medicare.

"[The new contract] was quite a bit better than the one we turned down," said Randy Shaw, a PPS driver and member of the union's Executive Board. "But a lot of the drivers still wanted to turn it down," Shaw said.

In the end, Shaw said, members voted to approve it by a two-to-one margin, and almost every member in the unit voted.

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## Lane, Coos, Curry &

## Douglas Building Trades

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## Linoleum Layers 1236

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 27, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

## Marion-Polk-Yamhill Labor Council

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, followed by a 7 p.m. general meeting at SEIU Local 503, 1730 Commercial St. SE, Salem.

## Metal Trades Council

Executive Board meets 8 a.m. Monday, March 10, at NOLC board room, 1125 SE Madison, Portland.  
Delegates meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

## Mid-Columbia Labor Council

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, at 3313 W. 2nd, The Dalles.

## Millwrights & Machinery Erectors 711

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, March 22, preceded by a 9 a.m. Executive Committee meeting, at the Carpenters Local 247 Hall, 2205 N. Lombard St., Portland.

## Molders 139

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 20, preceded by a 6 p.m. Executive Board meeting at the Carpenters Hall, 2205 N. Lombard, Portland.

## Northwest Oregon Labor Council

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Monday, March 24, at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

## Office & Professional Workers 11

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, at the Laborers/Teamster Hall, 2212 NE Andresen, Vancouver. Please Note: Nominations for the following offices will take place at this meeting: Executive Secretary (3 yr. term), Executive Board Utilities (2 yr. term),

Executive Board Labor Orgs (2 yr. term), Executive Board At Large (2 yr. term), Executive Board Public Sector (2 yr. term), Executive Board At Large (unexpired term), Executive Board Public Sector (unexpired term) and Trustee (3 yr. term).

## Painters & Drywall Finishers 10

Members meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 19, at the Asbestos Hall, 11145 N.E. Sandy, Portland.

## Pile Drivers, Divers & Shipwrights 2416

Members meet 7 p.m. Friday, March 28, preceded by a 6 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 2205 N Lombard, Portland.

## Portland City & Metropolitan Employees 189

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, at 6025 E. Burnside, Portland.  
General membership meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, 6025 E. Burnside, Portland.

## Roofers & Waterproofers 49

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, March 13. Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, April 3. Meetings are at 5032 SE 26th Ave, Portland. (Phone: 503 232-4807)

## Salem Building Trades

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Thursday, April 3, at the IBEW 280 Training Center, 33309 Hwy. 99E, Tangent.

## Sheet Metal Workers 16

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland

Medford area members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 12, at Wild River Pizza, 2684 N. Pacific Hwy., Medford.

Eugene area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 13, at the Local 16 Hall, 4748 Franklin Blvd., Eugene.

Coos Bay area members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, March 20, at the Labor Temple, 3427 Ash St., North Bend.

Portland area VOC members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 2, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379

NE 178th Ave., Portland.

## Sign Painters & Paint Makers 1094

Members meet 3:30 p.m. Monday, March 17, in the District Office, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

## Southern Oregon Central Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, at the Labor Temple, 4480 Rogue Valley Hwy. #3, Central Point.

## Southwestern Oregon Central Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Monday, March 3, at the Bay Area Labor Center, 3427 Ash, North Bend.

## United Association 290

Portland area members meet 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 21, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Astoria area members meet 6 pm Thursday, March 27, at the Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane St., Astoria.

Bend area members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, at the Local 290 Training Center, 2161 SW First, Redmond.

Brookings area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 1, at Curry County Search and Rescue, 417 Railroad St., Brookings.

Coos Bay area members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, at the Coos Bay Training Center, 2nd & Kruse, Coos Bay.

Eugene area members meet 6:30 p.m. Monday, March 24, at the Springfield Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

Klamath Falls area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, at 4816 S. 6th St., Klamath Falls.

Medford area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 27, at 650A Industrial Cir., White City.

Roseburg area members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, March 27, at 742 SE Roberts, Roseburg.

Salem area members meet 6 p.m. Monday, March 24, at 1810 Hawthorne Ave. NE, Salem.

The Dalles area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, at the United Steelworkers Local 9170 Union Hall, The Dalles.

Humboldt-Del Norte Co. area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, at the Eureka Training Center, 832 E St., Eureka, Calif.

## USW 1097

Members meet 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 19, preceded by a 3 p.m. Executive Board meeting, in the union office building, 91237 Old Mill Town Rd., Westport.

## Tickets on sale for Share dinner and concert

VANCOUVER — Several labor unions are helping Share, a non-profit organization that provides shelter, food and emergency services for people in Southwest Washington, through sponsorships at its fundraising events.

Share is hosting the 7th annual Share-a-Bowl dinner and concert Sunday, April 27 at Skyview High School, 1300 NW 139th St.

The concert will feature Patrick Lamb, a member of Musicians Local 99, as well as Linda Hornbuckle, Norman Sylvester, Karen Therese and Michael Allen Harrison.

Plumbers and Fitters Local 290 and the Northwest Labor Press are among several co-sponsor of the concert.

Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$5 for kids 5 to 12.

For tickets or more information on sponsoring a Share event, call Becky at 360-887-8556 or log on to their Web site at [www.sharevancouver.org](http://www.sharevancouver.org).

# Retiree Meeting Notices

## ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS OREGON CHAPTER

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, March 13, in the Northwest Oregon Labor Council board room, at 1125 SE Madison, Portland. Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, March 20, at Westmoreland Union Manor, 6404 SE 23rd Ave., Portland. All retirees are welcome to attend. **(PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE for this month only.)**

## CARPENTERS

Retired Carpenters meet for an 11:30 a.m. tour and 12:30 luncheon Monday, March 10, at the Carpenter's Training Center, 4222 NE 158th, Portland. **PLEASE RSVP** to Leo Larsen at 503 666-1613.

## ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

All Retired Electricians of Local 48, wives and friends meet for lunch 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, March 11, at Hometown Buffet, 10542 SE Washington St., Portland. Senior lunch is \$7.39. A brief business

meeting will follow. Suggestions for trips are welcome. For further information, please call Vera Larson at 503 252-2296.

SAVE THE DATE: April 8 for a FREE luxury bus trip to Lucky Eagle Casino in Rochester, WA.

## ELECTRICAL WORKERS 280

Retirees meet between 11:45 a.m. and noon Monday, March 10, at The Old Country Buffet on Lancaster in Salem, which is next to Michael's Craft store.

If you have any questions, please give Don Ball a call at 541-327-3388.

## IRON WORKERS 29

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 12, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

## NORTHWEST OREGON LABOR RETIREES COUNCIL

Business meeting from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Monday, March 10, at

1125 SE Madison, #100G, Portland.

## OREGON AFSCME

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 18, at the AFSCME office, 6025 E. Burnside, Portland. Call Michael Arken for information at 503-239-9858, ext. 124.

## SHEET METAL WORKERS 16

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, March 13, at Nicola's Pizza, 4826 N Lombard St, Portland. Everyone is invited.

## UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

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

Portland area retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, March 20, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Portland.

# U.S. trade deficit with China zooms

## More U.S. companies choosing China as the location to produce manufactured goods

America's trade imbalance with China is continuing to worsen, according to statistics released in February by the Foreign Trade Division of the U.S. Census Bureau.

In 2007, the trade deficit with China (exports minus imports) passed the quarter trillion dollar mark: \$256.3 billion. U.S. imports from China set a new record: \$321.5 billion. That's the equivalent of \$1,068 of Chinese goods for every man, woman and child in America, though even that figure is a way-below-wholesale price; it's what U.S. companies paid to Chinese enterprises. Meanwhile, U.S. exports to China also rose, to an estimated \$65.2 billion, though it consisted mostly of raw materials, parts and machines.

Overall the U.S. trade deficit with all its trading partners was down slightly, to \$711.6 billion in 2007, from \$758.5 billion in 2006. That owes to lowered consumer spending and a decline in the value of the dollar.

But China trade continues to zoom. The United States now imports more from China than from any other country. It's not like Chinese brands are filling American shelves. For the most part, imports are a case of U.S. companies choosing China as the location

to produce manufactured goods. Production that used to be outsourced to other less-developed countries is coming to be concentrated in China.

The imbalance is alarming to leaders of the American labor movement, which at one time was strongest in manufacturing.

"Our imbalance with China is unsustainable," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney in a press statement reacting to the release of the annual trade statistics. "Our government must take immediate and effective actions to ensure that the Chinese government plays by the rules — with respect to currency, illegal subsidies, tax policies and workers' rights."

The labor federation is backing a bill in Congress, the Currency Reform for Fair Trade Act (HR 2492), which declares currency manipulation an illegal trade subsidy and provides American manufacturers the opportunity to seek relief against countries that don't freely exchange their currency, including China.

China is so dominant in the consumer goods sector that it calls into question the recent stimulus package passed by Congress. To combat the recession, the IRS will be mailing out checks to Americans in the coming months, and the hope is they'll go shopping. But if they're spent on clothes, toys or electronic goods, those dollars likely won't employ American workers other than those whose jobs are to transport or sell the goods.

## Consumer prices rise higher in Portland area than rest of nation

The cost of everything is going up.


Last month the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics announced the Consumer Price Index (CPI) climbed 3.7 percent last year in the region running from Portland metro to Salem.

That's the biggest increase in a decade — and it tops the national CPI, which was 2.8 percent.

The CPI measures a broad range of consumer expenses in dozens of categories. Prices in the region were up in nearly every category in 2007. Gasoline jumped 11 percent; the average cost for medical care increased 12.7; and food and beverages rose 3.4 percent. The only declines locally were seen in natural gas, recreation and education — and none went down by more than 1 percent.

Since 2001, the inflation rate in the area has hovered around 2.6 percent or lower. The highest jump in the past 10 years was 3.3 percent.

Another measurement BLS takes is the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U). It measured 208.556 for the 2007 annual average. That means a market basket of goods and services that cost \$100 in 1982-84 would have cost \$208.56 in 2007.



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### Mesothelioma: treatment and compensation

#### Do I have a case?

If you've been diagnosed with mesothelioma, you may be able to obtain compensation for your disease. Why? Because mesothelioma is caused by asbestos, and the companies that made asbestos-containing products knew it was deadly. The law can force these companies to pay for poisoning you. The times, dates, places and products related to your asbestos exposure will determine whether or not you have a valid claim. Our firm can give you an idea about possible compensation in a ten minute phone call, or quicker.

#### Meso survival

If you've been diagnosed with mesothelioma, you're fighting for your life. Untreated, mesothelioma runs its course in about seven months. With the right doctors and the right therapy, it's possible to survive for as long as five years. Our firm works with the best meso specialists on the West Coast, and we have donated more than \$2 million to help find better treatment and a cure for mesothelioma. We can help you navigate the health maze and put you directly in touch with the best meso doctors in America.

#### Taking charge

If you've been diagnosed with mesothelioma, you've gone through every emotion humanly possible, as has your family. Now is the time to take charge. Medically, you have options and you have hope. Legally, you have rights related to asbestos exposure and disease. Our firm can help put you back in the driver's seat.

#### Fighting back

Your mesothelioma was likely caused by asbestos. Makers of asbestos-containing products knew they were selling lethal products since the 1930s, yet they did nothing to warn. Shipyard workers, pipefitters, insulators, painters, drywallers, machinists, housewives, students, Navy veterans — these and countless others were needlessly poisoned for the sake of profit. For every victim who fights, thousands of others have silently gone to the grave. We can help you fight back and let the poisoners know that they won't be let off the hook for their callous acts.

#### Demanding what's yours

If you've been diagnosed with mesothelioma, your medical bills are mounting. You may be deeply concerned about your family's finances if the disease progresses. Demanding compensation from the companies that poisoned you can help pay for medical treatment and can help assure that your family is provided for. We can help.

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## IN MEMORIAM

**Barbara Jo Hougen**, first vice president of the Northwest Oregon Labor Council and a longtime member and former officer of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 89, died Feb. 11, 2008, in Billings, Montana. Cause of death was liver and kidney failure. She was 57.

Hougen was born in Idaho Falls, Idaho, Nov. 29, 1950, daughter of Roger and Bonnie Wise Hougen. She attended business school in Idaho Falls before moving to Portland, where she worked for GTE (later, Verizon) for over 30 years.

She was an active member of IBEW Local 89, which is headquartered in Everett, Wash. Hougen served as a shop steward and chairperson for the Beaverton, Ore., unit from 1989-1998. She was elected to the union's Executive Board in 1981 and elected president of the local in 1986. She held that post for 12 years.

Hougen was first vice president of the Northwest Oregon Labor Council and was a delegate to IBEW interna-

tional conventions and to Oregon AFL-CIO state conventions. She had just been re-elected to the labor council post.

She retired from her job at Verizon on Dec. 15, 2007.

Soon after that, she fell ill and was hospitalized. She was taken from Portland to Billings, where she died with her family at her side.

She was preceded in death by her parents and a brother, Gerry.

Survivors include her siblings, Phyllis Thornton, Vicki Bertz, Britt Hougen, Sheila Wise and Tom Hougen; best friends Connie and Larry Pope; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Cremation has taken place and, at her request, no service will be held.

Remembrances can be made to: Hillsboro Public Library, 2850 NE Brookwood Parkway, Hillsboro, OR 97124; IBEW Local 89, P.O. Box 2330, Everett, WA 98213; or Animal Aid Inc., P.O. Box 863, Beaverton, OR 97075.



Bakers Local 114 Secretary-Treasurer Terry Lansing (right) shows displaced workers from Kerry Sweet Ingredients around a job fair it hosted March 1.

## Bakers #114 holds job fair for nonunion crew

Portland Bakers Local 114 held a job fair March 1 for nonunion employees at Kerry Sweet Ingredients in Tualatin.

Kerry, one of the world's largest manufacturers of food ingredients, with headquarters in Ireland, announced in December that it would close its Tualatin plant in June 2008 and lay off 80 employees. The plant makes cookies and ice cream.

Workers tried to join Local 114 starting last spring, but faced a brutal anti-union campaign. Management held mandatory meetings, fired a key union supporter, and threatened to close down if the union won.

Local 114 filed several unfair labor practice charges, along with 19 objections to employer conduct prior to and during the union election – which it lost in August by just nine votes.

The regional office of the National Labor Relations Board investigated the complaints and forwarded eight charges to the full Board in Washington, D.C.

There the Bush-appointed Board found no merit to the charges, and validated the election.

In December, the company said it was closing.

"We made a commitment to these folks, and we're standing behind it," said Eric Anderson, an international rep for the Bakers Union. "This is a win-win for everybody."

The union set up a job fair at the Plumbers and Fitters Hall in Tualatin, where they invited representatives from unionized shops United States Bakery's Franz Bread and Smith Cookies; Kroger Clackamas Bakery; Safeway Bread Plant; and Bimbo/Oroweat Bakery, to come interview prospective employees and take applications.

Fortunately, March and April are busy months for the baking industry, so the union is confident it can find work for some of the displaced Kerry employees.

### UNION LAYOFFS SINCE JANUARY 2008

**ROBERTS MOTORS** (Closure)  
Portland, Eugene, Medford, Redmond  
Union(s): Machinists Local 24, Teamsters #305  
Number Affected: 162

**SEALY MATTRESS** (Seasonal/Temporary Layoff)  
Union(s): Steelworkers #330, Teamsters #162 and #206  
Number Affected: 150

**COE MANUFACTURING** (Cessation of manufacturing)  
Union(s): Teamsters #305  
Number Affected: 45

**BAY VALLEY FOODS** (Closure)  
Stienfeld pickles;  
Union(s): Teamsters #305  
Number Affected: 88

**OHSU** (Layoff)  
Union(s): AFSCME #328  
Number Affected: (Unknown)  
Possibly 200-300 "program specific"

### NONUNION LAYOFFS SINCE JANUARY 2008

**MERIX CORPORATION** (Closure)  
Number Affected: 131

**KERRY SWEET INGREDIENTS** (Closure)  
Number Affected: 80

**NATIONWIDE INSURANCE** (Closure)  
Number Affected: 230 call center employees

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FIREPROOF FLOOR safe, reasonable. 503 287-7622  
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### Miscellaneous

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## Roofers raise cash for Food Bank

Roofers Local 49 of Portland held a first-ever Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament. Proceeds totaling \$2,000 went to the Carpenters Food Bank. More than 66 participated in the event, with the top 10 finishers (pictured above at the table) awarded prizes. Troy Hatchell, a member of Communications Workers of America Local 7901, finished first, followed by Jim Kefahas of Carpenters Local 2260, and Mike Fahey. Fahey is a former executive secretary-treasurer of the Portland Metal Trades Council and coordinator of the Carpenters Food Bank. The all-volunteer food bank is housed in the basement of the union hall at 2205 N. Lombard, Portland. It feeds between 425 to 500 families a month. Food boxes are distributed the third Friday each month.

## Oregon retirees group to meet April 26

The Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans will hold its fifth annual convention April 26 at the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Hall, 2435 NW Front Ave., Portland.

Registration for the convention, which opens at 9 a.m. and runs until 3 p.m., is \$25 and includes lunch.

For more information, call the Oregon ARA at 503-284-8591



Left to right: Dave Johnson, Bruce Barnes, JR Robertson, Rob Toves and Bill Munson — all members of IBEW Local 48 — fly their union's banner at Eco Park Resort in Toutle, WA. as they prepare to feed starving elk. The men are volunteers of Mt. Saint Helens Rescue.

## Union members feed starving elk in Washington

VANCOUVER — Mt. Saint Helens Rescue, an organization with strong ties to members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, has been raising money and volunteering to feed starving elk herds in Southwest Washington this past winter.

The group's founder, Bruce Barnes, a member of IBEW Local 48, says he and other members of Local 48 and IBEW 125 have been taking alfalfa by the ton-loads to Eco Park Resort in Toutle, WA. and Muddy Creek in Cougar Wash., everyweek-

end since January.

"We've delivered more than 50 tons," he said.

Supplemental food supplies are needed, he says, because a plan by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is failing. According to the department, the elk population has outgrown the land's ability to provide food.

It all started with the eruption of Mt. St. Helens in May of 1980, when hundreds of thousands of trees were blown down. The devastation allowed grasses and sedges that elk eat to thrive — resulting in elk populations to grow.

However, as trees were replanted and (timber harvesting slowed on neighboring national forest land) shade caused a decrease in the growth of the foliage — and less food for the elk. Throw on top of that several cold, snowy winters, and the now overpopulated elk can't find enough food to survive.

"Leaving the elk to starve to death is animal neglect and cruelty by our government agency which was created to protect and create sound stewardship of the fish and wildlife in the state of Washington," Barnes said.

electrical contractor EC Company and the IBEW & United Workers Federal Credit Union have donated cash to help purchase the alfalfa to feed the elk. The cost so far has been more than \$7,500. Barnes hopes other unions, and possibly the newly created Union Sportsman's Alliance, will help even more. The Union Sportsman's Alliance is a program of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, a coalition of hunting, fishing and conservation organizations nationwide.

Donations checks can be made out and sent to:

Pioneer Feed and Supply  
Attention: Mike Agard  
21417 NE 10th Ave  
Ridgefield, WA 98642

For more information, call Barnes at 360-513-3874, or go to [www.mtsainthelensrescue.com](http://www.mtsainthelensrescue.com)

(Editor's Note: The Mt. Saint Helens Rescue was founded in 2006 with a mission of ensuring the future of fish and wildlife while securing future recreational opportunities in the wilderness areas of Southwest Washington for hunting, snowmobiling, horseback riding, hiking and ATV riding.)

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MARCH 7, 2008

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# Union helps students train for robotics competition

## *Plumbers and Fitters Local 290 opens part of its training center so that high school students can test their robots in scrimmages*

The 2008 Oregon Regional FIRST Robotics Competition wrapped up last weekend at Memorial Coliseum. And for the first time ... ever ... organized labor was involved.

FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) is a national non-profit organization that each year conducts a national robotics contest for high school students. The organization was founded by Dean Kaman (the man who invented the Segway transporter).

This year, 55 teams from a half-dozen Western states and Canada competed at Memorial Coliseum — one of 41 regional events held nationwide.

From its inception seven years ago, large corporations such as Xerox, Hewlett Packard and Mentor Graphics have participated as sponsors and mentors. This year, Plumbers and Fitters Local 290 and IBEW Local 280 of Tangent got involved — Local 290 as a regional sponsor and Local 280 as a co-sponsor for teams from Corvallis.

Debra Mumm-Hill, regional director for FIRST Pacific Northwest, said Local 290 is the first union in the nation to be involved in the competition as a sponsor.

At the contest kick-off Jan. 5, Local 290 made arrangements to accommodate more than 400 students and parents at their training center in Tualatin, feeding them breakfast and hooking up a satellite feed with NASA so that the students could learn what their project would be. NASA is a major sponsor of the competition. Then on Feb. 16, the union hosted a scrimmage at the training center. This allowed any team that wanted to come and test their robots on a replica track set up by Local 290 Business Agent Jerry Moss.

“We’ve never had scrimmages before, because we’ve never had a facility that could do it,” said David Porter, a mechanical engineer and Volunteer Coordinator for Oregon. “This is excellent.”

Both Mumm-Hill and Porter believe it is critical to link educators, industry and labor together to work with students. “When FIRST started, the assumption was that the kids competing would all go to MIT,” Porter said. “That has evolved.”

Mumm-Hill said that for every engineer “you need a team of seven to 10 skilled workers — machinists, plumbers, electricians — who can do the work. It’s a real team effort.” She said Local 290 “has gone out of its way to help us” and that Moss has opened a lot of doors for the organization.

“We look forward to our partnership with the labor unions as we continue to reach more and more high school students in Oregon,” she said.

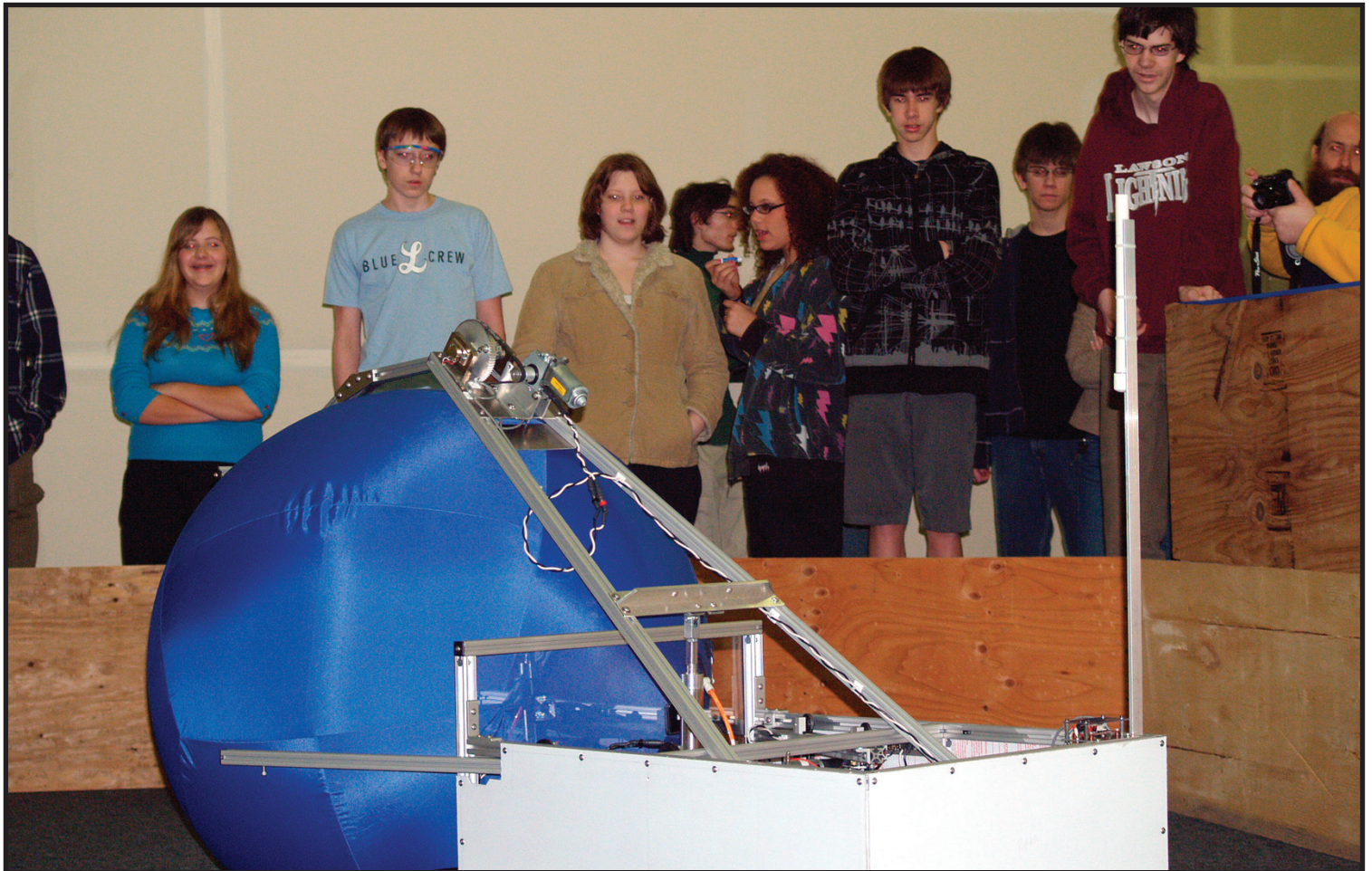
Here’s how the competition works: Teams (which can range from four students to more than 30) are presented with a kit of parts made up of motors, batteries, a control system and a mix of automation components — but no instructions. Working with mentors, students are given six weeks to design, build and test their robots to meet the year’s challenge designed by a committee of engineers and other professionals.

In this year’s game, robots are designed to race around a track knocking down 40-inch inflated Trackballs and moving them around the track, passing them either over or under a 6’6” overpass.

Moss has since joined the board of directors for FIRST Northwest (as has Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner) and is now in training to become a contest judge. For his efforts, he was awarded the group’s “Volunteer of the Year” at the regional finals March 1.

“We’ve been trying for a long time to let schools in our area know that we exist,” Moss said. “What’s neat is that this has actually opened doors for us. I’ve had a lot of positive feedback from teachers and parents.”

Moss would like to see more unions and signatory contractors get involved



(ABOVE) Students from nearly a dozen area high schools converged on the Plumbers and Fitters Training Center in Tualatin Feb. 16 to scrimmage robots in preparation for the Oregon Regional FIRST Robotics Competition held Feb. 29-March 1 at Portland’s Memorial Coliseum. (BELOW) A team from the Beaverton Education Foundation cheers on a competitor at the Oregon Regional.



as sponsors, mentors and volunteers. “This is a great way to build student interest in math, science, and technology. You have to remember, these kids are the workforce of the future,” he said.

For more information, call Mumm-Hill at 503-657-0774 or Porter at 971-678-1189.

***This season, more than 1,500 teams — including a record 316 rookie teams — will participate nationwide. Top finishers at the 41 regional competitions advance to the national championship in Atlanta April 1–19.***