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NORTHWEST

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Stimulus act — one year later

By DON McINTOSH
Associate Editor

Feb. 17, 2010, marked one year since the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) — better-known as the federal economic stimulus package — was signed into law.

In the public mind, ARRA has frequently been confused with the \$700 billion October 2008 bank bailout known as the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP). ARRA has also been widely mischaracterized as a “jobs” bill in which the federal government would quickly spend roughly \$800 billion.

In fact, that dollar figure is the bill’s estimated budget impact over a 10-year period, and two-fifths of it (\$320 billion) consists of tax cuts, while much of the remainder would be better described as relief spending — unemployment benefits, health care assistance, and one-time \$250 bonus checks to Social Security recipients. About one-sixteenth (\$50 billion) went to bail out states to prevent teacher layoffs. Less than a tenth of the bill’s price tag (\$80 billion) was dedicated to traditional job-creation efforts such as spending on infrastructure.

ProPublica, a non-profit investigative journalism group that has been tracking stimulus spending, reported that as of March 1, \$190 billion in stimulus funds had been spent, and \$119 billion of the tax cuts had taken effect, for a total impact on the economy of \$309 billion.

On the one-year anniversary of

ARRA’s signing, top Obama Administration officials touted ARRA’s successes and insisted it had “created or saved” 2 million jobs. But top union leaders either praised the stimulus while saying it was too small, or said nothing at all. AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka made no statement. Change To Win labor federation Chair Anna Burger said hundreds of thousands of Americans who are now employed as a direct result of the stimulus law can thank congressional Democrats who “championed the legislation that stopped the bleeding in a devastating recession.”

No House Republican voted for ARRA, and only three Senate Republicans did so. Oregon’s Fourth District Congressman Peter DeFazio was one of just seven Democrats to vote against the bill’s final version, saying it had too many tax cuts and not enough investment in programs to create jobs. DeFazio — who chairs the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee’s Highways and Transit Subcommittee — is a longtime advocate of federal infrastructure investment. The Labor Press spoke with him by phone Feb. 25.

LABOR PRESS: A year ago, you were pretty critical of the stimulus act. What’s your assessment today?

DEFAZIO: I’d say I was right. I often ask people what they did with their tax cut that put people back to work, and everybody says, “What tax cut? I didn’t get a tax cut.”

And I say, “Yeah, your withholding was reduced by like \$12 a week last year, and \$8 a week this year. All that money was borrowed, and your grandkids are gonna still be paying for it.” And people are dismayed to hear that.

There was about seven times as much money devoted to tax cuts in the bill as there was to infrastructure investment. I would say the infrastructure investment worked very well. We did a number of projects related to roads, bridges, highways and transit. They all had Buy America requirements, so we kept the money home, and put people to work at good wages because of Davis-Bacon [the requirement to pay

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DELIVERY AFTER DARK

Short-staffing forces letter carriers to finish delivering their expanding mail routes in the dark

Letter carriers have March 14 circled on their calendars. That’s when daylight saving time begins — and the extra hour or so of sunlight will be a godsend.

Short-staffing at the United States Post Office has resulted in the consolidation of mail routes. On many days that extra load forces letter carriers to continue delivering mail long after the sun has gone down. And that can make for dangerous working conditions.

In daylight hours, buckled sidewalks, wet leaves, low-hanging tree branches, garden hoses, and dogs can be seen — and avoided. Not so in the dark.

Carriers say walking routes after nightfall puts them at greater risk of slipping and tripping or being bitten. In December, a letter carrier from Eastern Jackson County, Missouri, was killed after being struck by a car while delivering mail after nightfall.

“This repeated after-dark delivery is the worst I’ve seen in my 25-year career,” said Jamie Partridge, a member of Letter Carriers Branch 82 who works out of Piedmont Station in Northeast Portland.

Union requests that management provide adequate staffing to avoid working late hours — especially during

the higher mail volume months of November and December — were spurned.

“Local management says it doesn’t have the authority to hire additional carriers — not even transitional (non-career) employees,” said Branch 82 President Jim Cook. “We were told that in order to get approval from regional level USPS management to hire additional carriers for Portland, the performance indicators must be at an acceptable level. Based on management’s criteria, they say we are more than 50 employees over complement.”

The union filed numerous grievances, pointing to a memorandum of understanding in its collective bargaining agreement stating that “delivery after dark is both inefficient and unsafe, therefore, it is not the intent to require carriers to deliver after dark ...”

The grievances were successful, with letter carriers winning settlements of \$50 per after-dark violation, resulting in thousands of dollars in awards.

But that didn’t stop the after dark delivery. In meetings with carriers, local USPS management insisted that delivery after dark was “not inherently unsafe.” Some letter carriers were issued headlamps.

The union reached out to Oregon’s

congressional representatives for help, including U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley. In early January, Branch 82 filed a class-action grievance on behalf of all Portland area carriers.

The grievance process can involve multiple steps. One briefing was held last week, with more scheduled later this month — after clocks are turned forward an hour.

(Editor’s Note: The front page photo is of Letter Carrier Jamie Partridge sorting through mail with help of a headlamp. The photo was taken by LaVern Simmons.)


Labor’s reaction to special session of Legislature mixed

SALEM — Before the Feb. 25 adjournment of the 2010 Special Session, the majority-Democratic Oregon Legislature passed a variety of bills important to organized labor. Those included:

- A ban on employers considering job applicants’ credit history. Authored by State Sen. Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland), the bill bans the use of credit checks for the purpose of hiring or promotion, with an exception for public safety employees. It passed largely on

party lines, with Democrats in support and Republicans opposing. One Republican, Rep. Kim Thatcher (Keizer), voted for it, while four Democrats voted against it: State Sen. Martha Schrader and State Reps. Jeff Barker (Aloha), Brent Barton (Clackamas), and Dave Edwards (Hillsboro).

- A six-week extension of unemployment insurance benefits. Passed unanimously in both chambers, the bill



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Rep. Schrader opposes TRADE Act; wants U.S. to hurry free trade agreement with South Korea

Oregon's 5th District Congressman Kurt Schrader told the Northwest Oregon Labor Council Executive Board Feb. 22 that he doesn't support a bill aimed at reforming U.S. trade policy, and that he wants the United States to quickly sign a free trade deal with South Korea.

During his first term in Congress, the veterinarian and former state senator from Canby has compiled an interim Committee on Political Education (COPE) voting record of 94 percent, based on 17 worker-related issues tracked by the national AFL-CIO. None of the bills tracked dealt with trade.

Asked about Rep. Michael Michaud's (D-Maine) Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment (TRADE) Act, which would create a new U.S. trade agreement model that benefits America's workers, consumers, farmers, and businesses, Schrader said he would "have a tough time getting there (supporting it), the way it is worded." He didn't indicate the specific language in the bill that bothered him, although he did point out that he supports inclusion of environmental and labor standards in any and all free trade deals.

A total of 134 members of Congress have cosponsored the TRADE Act.

The bill also has strong support from organized labor.

The TRADE Act establishes a process for the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to review existing trade agreements; sets criteria for what must be included in future trade agreements, such as bans on Buy American provisions and new rights and privileges for foreign investors; and reasserts congressional authority in the trade policymaking process. Issues covered by the legislation include labor rights, the environment, food safety, human rights, financial regulation, national security and more.

Schrader went on to say that the U.S. needs to quickly ratify a trade deal with South Korea, "because if China beats us to it, we'll be in a world of hurt."

He said the U.S. needs to export more goods in order to ramp up the

economy. "The federal government is tapped out on what it can spend, and it's unlikely the American consumer will come back and buy and spend the way they used to. This means a longer and slower recovery," he said.

Schrader said at this juncture he is opposed to the Colombia Free Trade Agreement, and is undecided on the Panama FTA.

At the NOLC Executive Board meeting, Schrader listened to a variety of labor concerns and ideas, including revising the Pension Protection Act of 2006, maintaining six-day delivery of the mail, and using stimulus dollars to replace aging fleets of mail trucks in Portland with U.S.-made electric mail trucks.

Schrader is facing a challenger in the Democratic primary in May and, if victorious, will have Republican opposition in November's general election.

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Piedmont Post Office dedicated in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.

The Portland Post Office's Piedmont Station was dedicated in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during a special ceremony Feb. 17, attended by Congressman Earl Blumenauer.

The renaming of the facility at 630 NE Killingsworth St., Portland, was the result of a community effort led by Branch 82 Letter Carriers Jamie Partridge and Isham Harris. In 2007, Partridge and Harris collected employee signatures supporting the renaming, as well as letters of support from the Piedmont and Concordia neighborhood associations, and the Sabin Community Association. They presented the petition to Blumenauer, who drafted legislation to rename the facility, which is required by law. After some delays, the bill was passed — with support of every member of the Oregon delegation in both the House and the Senate — and signed into law by President Barack Obama on Nov. 30, 2009.

The Feb. 17 ceremony was highlighted by the unveiling of a plaque officially naming the facility in Dr. King's honor.

Stat of the Month

Between 1992 and 2007, notes Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist David Cay Johnston, the bottom 90 percent of Americans saw their incomes inch up by 13 percent, in 2009 dollars. Incomes for the top 400, over the same years, soared 399 percent.

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Clark, Skamania, West Klickitat CLC gets new officers; name change in the works

VANCOUVER —The Clark, Skamania West Klickitat Counties Central Labor Council voted Feb. 25 to change its name to the Southwest Washington Central Labor Council. The action requires a bylaws change and approval from the national AFL-CIO. The entire process could take months.

Several political candidates attended the monthly council meeting, including 3rd Congressional District Democratic hopeful Denny Heck. A staffer from State Sen. Craig Pridemore's campaign handed out literature. The two are vying for the U.S. House seat being vacated by Brian Baird.

The council will conduct candidate interviews in the coming months and make an endorsement recommendation to the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO. The primary is in August.

Also addressing the 40-plus delegates and guests were Clark County deputy prosecuting attorney Tony Golik and Evergreen school teacher Monica Stonier. Golik, who is president of AFSCME Local 307PA, is running for Clark County prosecutor, and Stonier, a member of the Washington Education Association, is seeking the open State Representatives seat in the 17th District, Position 2.

In January the labor council installed new officers. They are listed in the photo on the right.



New officers of the Vancouver-based Clark, Skamania, West Klickitat Counties Central Labor Council are from front row left: Vice President Judy Kuschel of the Washington Federation of State Employees Local 313; President Shannon Walker of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555; and Secretary-Treasurer Roy Jennings of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757. In the back row from left are: Trustee Mark Rauchenstein of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers Local 17; Executive Board Member Cathy Hulse of the National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 1104; Trustee John Murphy of Bakers Local 364; Sergeant-at-Arms Rick Thompson of Machinists Lodge 63; and Executive Board member Scott Orrell of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 4. Not pictured are Trustee Karly Edwards of UNITE HERE Local 9, and Executive Board members Roben White of Painters Local 10 and Ted Couch of Laborers Local 335.

Alliance for Retired Americans to hold convention March 13

"The Challenge Before Us" is the theme of this year's convention of the Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans.

The event is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Saturday, March 13, at the Holiday Inn Portland Airport, 8439 NE Columbia Blvd., Portland.

Speakers include Dani Pere, director of Alliance for Retired Americans field mobilization; Tom Chamberlain, president of the Oregon AFL-CIO; and Steve Novick, a former Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate and spokesman for the Yes on Measures 66 and 67 campaign.

Registration is \$30 and include a continental breakfast and lunch.

For more information, call Roz Giese at 503-654-7116 or e-mail to ed-nroz@webtv.net.

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Credit Union to hold annual meeting April 20

The IBEW & United Workers Federal Credit Union will hold its annual meeting Tuesday, April 20, at the Sheet Metal Local 16 Hall, 2379 NE 178th, Portland. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. Light hors d'oeuvres will be served at 6:30 p.m.

For more information, call Jeanine Lopez at 503-262-5309.



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Official Notices

BAKERY, CONFECTIONERY, TOBACCO WORKERS AND GRAIN MILLERS 114

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 23, in the meeting room at 7931 NE Halsey, Suite 205, Portland. Two Executive Board vacancies will be filled at this meeting.

DELEGATE ELECTION NOTICE: Ballots are being mailed March 5, 2010, and returned ballots will be picked up by the election committee from the Mail Box at 9 a.m. on March 22, 2010. Ballots will be counted on March 22, 2010.

BOILERMAKERS 500

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, March 13, at 2515 NE Columbia Blvd., Portland.

BRICKLAYERS AND ALLIED CRAFTWORKERS 1

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 16, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

CEMENT MASONS 555

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, March 18, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

CENTRAL OREGON LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 5:30 p.m. Monday, March 22, at UA 290 Training Center, 2161 SE 1st St., Redmond.

CLARK, SKAMANIA & W. KLICKITAT COUNTIES LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 25, preceded by an Executive Board meeting, at the ILWU Local 4 Hall, 1205 Ingalls St., Vancouver, Wash.

COLUMBIA-PACIFIC BUILDING TRADES

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Tuesdays, March 9 and March 16, at Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th, Portland.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Electrical Workers Minority Caucus meets 5 p.m. Tuesday, March 9 in the Executive Boardroom Sound and Communication Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 10 in the Meeting Hall Residential Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 10, in the Dispatch Lobby.

Vancouver Meeting, 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 10, at Round Table Pizza, 5016 NE Thurston, Vancouver.

Coast Unit meets 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 10, at Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane St., Astoria.

Wasco Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 10, at Beneventi's Pizza, 201 Stueben, Bingen, WA.

Bylaws Committee meets 5:30 p.m. Monday, March 15, in the Executive Boardroom.

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays, March 17 and April 7, in the Executive Boardroom.

Electrical Women of Local 48 meets 5:30 p.m. Friday, March 19, at 5th Quadrant, 3901b N. Williams, Portland.

Marine Unit meets 5 p.m. Monday, March 22, in the Meeting Hall.

General Membership Meeting meets 6:30pm Wednesday, March 24, in the Meeting Hall. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for sandwiches.

Your Business Manager Meeting, 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. Saturday, March 27, in the Meeting Hall.

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

DEATH ASSESSMENTS: The March 2010 assessment is \$1.50. The following death assessments have been declared: No. 2225, Edward L. Johnson; No. 2226, Allen w. Conklin; No. 2227, Richard F. Lance; No. 2228, Patrick J. McElroy; and No. 2229, Robert P. Schneller. Effective 1/1/10, the Death Assessments are \$1.50 per month per Active member.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS 280

Bend Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, March 11, at the IBEW/UA Training Center, 2161 SW First St., Redmond.

Eugene Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 17, at the LU 290 Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

Salem Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, March 18, at Salem Heights, Liberty & Madrona, Salem, OR.

ELEVATOR CONSTRUCTORS 23

Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 11, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 12779 NE Whitaker Way, Portland.

FIRE FIGHTERS 452

Members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 7, at 2807 NW Fruit Valley Rd., Vancouver.

FIRE FIGHTERS 1660

Members meet 8 a.m. Thursday, March 11, at 4411 SW Sunset Dr., Lake Oswego.

INSULATORS 36

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 10. Members meet 7 p.m. Friday, March 12. Meetings are at 11145 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

IRON WORKERS 29

Members meet 7 p.m., Thursday, April 1, 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, March 11, 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir., #300, Portland.

LABOR ROUNDTABLE OF SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

Delegates meet 8 a.m. Friday, March 12, at Home-town Buffet, 7809-B Vancouver Plaza Dr., Vancouver, Wash.

LABORERS 320

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, March 11, at Joe Edgar Hall, Teamsters' Complex, 1850 NE 162nd Ave., Portland.

LABORERS/VANCOUVER 335

Members meet 7 p.m. Monday, April 5, 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, March 16, at the Musicians Hall, 325 NE 20th Ave., Portland.

LANE COUNTY LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 24, at 1116 South A St., Springfield.

LANE, COOS, CURRY & DOUGLAS BUILDING TRADES

Delegates meet at noon Wednesday, March 24, at the Springfield Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.



LINOLEUM LAYERS 1236

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 25, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland. **PLEASE NOTE:** This meeting is SPECIAL CALL to vote on wage allocation for the April 1 increase. Members will also vote on Local 1236 bylaws and DC 5 bylaws.

MARION-POLK-YAMHILL LABOR COUNCIL

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 9, followed by a 7 p.m. General Meeting at 2110 State St., Salem.

METAL TRADES COUNCIL

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, March 11. Delegates meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, March 23. Meetings are at the IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

MID-COLUMBIA LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 9, at 3313 W. 2nd, The Dalles.

MILLWRIGHTS & MACHINERY ERECTORS 711

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, March 27, preceded by a 9 a.m. Executive Committee meeting, at the Carpenters Local 247 Hall, 2205 N. Lombard St., Portland.

NORTHWEST OREGON LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Monday, March 22, at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

OFFICE & PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES 11

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 9, at the Laborers/Teamsters Hall, 2212 Andresen, Vancouver. Nomination of officers will take place at this meeting.

PAINTERS & DRYWALL FINISHERS 10

Members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 17, at the Asbestos Hall 11145 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland. Notice: There will be a Special Order of Business at this meeting to discuss and vote on the proposed changes to Local #10 and District Council #5 Bylaws. The proposed changes will be mailed to the membership the last week in February for review prior to the March 17th meeting.

PLEASE NOTE: Each member may have a chance to win their dues paid or cash by attending the monthly meeting. Ricky Lovett would have been the winner if he had attended the Feb. 17 meeting.

ROOFERS & WATERPROOFERS 49

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, March 11. Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, April 1.

Meetings are at 5032 SE 26th Ave., Portland. (503 232-4807)

SALEM BUILDING BCTC

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Thursday, April 1, at the IBEW 280 Training Center, 33309 Hwy 99E, Tangent.

SHEET METAL WORKERS 16

PLEASE NOTE: Building Trades Contract formulation meetings will be held at the following meetings.

Portland members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 9, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

Medford area members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 10, at Wild River Pizza, 2684 N. Pacific Hwy., Medford.

Eugene area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 11, at the Local 16 Hall, 4748 Franklin Blvd., Eugene.

Coos Bay area members meet 4 p.m. Thursday, March 18, at Bay Area Labor Center, 3427 Ash, North Bend. **NOTE TIME CHANGE.**

Portland area VOC meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 7, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

SOUTHERN OREGON

CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 9, at the Labor Temple, 4480 Rogue Valley Hwy. #3, Central Point.

SOUTHWESTERN OREGON

CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Monday, April 5, at the Bay Area Labor Center, 3427 Ash, North Bend.

UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

Portland area members meet 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 19, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Astoria area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 25, at the Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane, Astoria.

Bend area members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 23, at the Local 290 Training Center, 2161 SW First, Redmond.

Brookings area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 30, at Curry County Search and Rescue, 517 Railroad St., Brookings.

Coos Bay area members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 23, at the Coos Bay Training Center, 2nd & Kruse, Coos Bay.

Eugene area members meet 6:30 p.m. Monday, March 22, at the Springfield Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

Klamath Falls area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, March 23, at 4816 S 6th St., Klamath Falls.

Medford area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 25, at 950 Industrial Cir., White City.

Roseburg area members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, March 25, at the Roseburg Labor Temple, 742 SE Roberts, Roseburg.

Salem area members meet 6 p.m. Monday, March 22, at 1810 Hawthorne Ave. NE, Salem.

The Dalles area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 23, at the United Steelworkers Local 9170 Union Hall, The Dalles.

Humboldt-Del Norte Co. area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 23, at the Eureka Training Center, 634 California St., Eureka.

UNITED STEELWORKERS 1097

Members meet 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 17, preceded by a 3 p.m. Executive Board meeting, in the union office building, 91237 Old Mill Town Rd., Westport.

National Labor College creates online program

SILVER SPRING, MD — The National Labor College is establishing an online service that will offer degree programs to union members.

Tentatively named the College for Working Families, the program will enable working adults to build on their prior training and experience, notably in formal and informal learning provided through union- and industry-sponsored training programs, as well as through local institutions, particularly community colleges.

The Princeton Review Inc. and its subsidiary, Penn Foster Education Group, are partnering with the Labor College to implement the program, which could be launched later this year.

Retiree Meeting Notices

ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS OREGON CHAPTER

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, March 11, at NOLC, 1125 SE Madison, Portland.

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, March 25, at SEIU Hall, 6401 SE Foster, Portland. All retirees are welcome to attend.

CARPENTERS

Retired Carpenters meet for lunch 11 a.m. Monday, March 8, at Izzy's Pizza, 1307 NE 102nd Ave., Portland.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, March 9, at Hometown Buffet, (by Mall 205) 10452A SE Washington, Portland.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS 280

Retirees meet between 11:45 a.m. and noon Monday, March 8, at Hometown Buffet on Lancaster in Salem, in

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

IRON WORKERS 29

Retirees meet at noon, Wednesday, March 10, at the Eagles, 4904 SE Hawthorne, Portland.

MILLWRIGHTS 711

Retirees meet noon Wednesday, March 17, at Hometown Buffet, (by Mall 205) 10452A SE Washington, Portland.

NORTHWEST OREGON LABOR RETIREES COUNCIL

Business meeting from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Monday, March 8, in the Northwest Oregon Labor Council board room, at 1125 SE Madison, Portland.

OREGON AFSCME

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Tuesday,

March 16, at the AFSCME office, 6025 E. Burnside, Portland. Call Michael Arken for information at 1-800-521-5954, ext. 226.

SHEET METAL WORKERS 16

Retired Carpenters meet for lunch 11:30 a.m. Thursday, March 11, at Izzy's Pizza, 1307 NE 102nd Ave., Portland.

UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, March 18, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Rusty Pipe retirees meet 2 p.m. Thursday, March 11, at the Springfield Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

Salem area retirees meet 12 noon Wednesday, March 10, at Almost Home Restaurant, 3310 Market St. SE, Salem.

Unemployment benefits running out? Republican Senator says 'tough shit'

WASHINGTON, D.C. — For routine business, the U.S. Senate operates on the basis of "unanimous consent," meaning they only proceed if no senator objects. On Feb. 26, Sen. Jim Bunning (R-Kentucky) decided to withhold consent on allowing a vote on a bill authorizing a 30-day extension of unemployment insurance benefits, COBRA health insurance subsidies for laid-off workers, delaying cuts to Medicare reimbursement rates to doctors, and other items. An estimated 1.2 million American workers could lose unemployment benefits in March if the Senate doesn't act to renew. Two days before the expirations would begin, Bunning said he wanted them to be paid for out of stimulus money.

Oregon U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley reportedly pleaded with Bunning to drop his objection, to which Bunning replied, "tough shit."

Senate rules allow tremendous latitude for individual senators to obstruct. Bunning's action put off the re-authorizations, with a series of effects that began March 2, including furloughs of construction workers on some federal projects, loss of unemployment benefits for others, and cuts in Medicare rates to doctors. The dispute had yet to be resolved as of press time.

Unions make donations to motorcycle 'poker run' event

The 8th annual Motorcycle Poker Run, chili cook-off, and raffle will be held Saturday, June 12, starting and finishing at IBEW Local 48.

The event is sponsored by Unions for Kids, a non-profit all-volunteer group of union members and contractors who raise money for Doernbecher Children's Hospital.

A major part of the fundraiser is a raffle for a new Harley-Davidson motorcycle. This year it's a 2010 Heritage Softail Classic in red-hot sungle. The retail value is \$18,804. Tickets are \$10 each, with only 4,000 sold.

Additional ways the group raises money is through corporate and/or union sponsorships, donations of cash

and prizes for a silent auction, and volunteering.

Exterior/Interior Specialists Local 2154 has donated \$2,154 to this year's event. Several other union locals have kicked in \$1,000 each, including Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757, the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Locals 48, 280 and 302; and Machinists Lodge 63.

"The challenge is on," said Lee Duncan, an IBEW Local 48 member and president of Unions for Kids.

For more information about the event, including where to purchase tickets, visit their Web site at www.unionsforkids.org.

Hawaii nurses, umpires affiliate with Office and Professional Employees

The Hawaii Nurses Association and the Association of Minor League Umpires have voted to affiliate with Office and Professional Employees International Union, AFL-CIO.

The 4,000-member Hawaii Nurses Association withdrew from the United American Nurses (UAN), which was dissolved in 2009 following an internal dispute. UAN ultimately merged with the California Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee to form National Nurses United.

HNA was given the official local number, OPEIU Local 50 because Hawaii is the 50th state.

The 215 members of the Associa-

tion of Minor League Umpires, based in Massachusetts, voted to affiliate with OPEIU. The union will be known as AMLU/OPEIU Guild 322 (3 balls, 2 strikes, 2 outs).

Prior to its formation in 2000, minor league umpires had been working with no representation. Since that time, the independent union was able to secure health insurance for umpires and establish a ranking and promotion system to standardize movement up through the various leagues. Despite those changes and a strike that was honored by 100 percent of the umpires in 2006, some key goals were not obtained.

"We're now looking to take the um-

pires to another level and secure rights and benefits afforded to other baseball professionals, including wage improvements, job security and better working conditions," OPEIU said in a statement.

The life of a minor league umpire is difficult, with low pay, no vacation or sick time and no ability to return home during the long season, which lasts from spring training in March to mid to late September. Salary for a minor league umpire starts at \$1,800 per month and is only paid during the season, forcing the umpires to work a second or third job during the off-season.

Minor league umpires work regularly in Major League Baseball, filling in for sick, injured or vacationing full-time umpires. More than 1,300 regular season MLB games had at least one AMLU member on the field in the 2009 season.

Vote makes it final: Laurelhurst Village will be a union nursing home

Workers at Southeast Portland's Laurelhurst Village nursing home reaffirmed their decision to unionize in a Feb. 16 election conducted by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). In a unit of 144, the vote was 76 to 23 in favor of joining Service Employees International Union Local 503.

Parent company Farmington Centers had already agreed to recognize and bargain with Local 503 in November, after a majority of employees signed union authorization cards. But under a rule devised by the Bush-era NLRB, such card check certifications can be set aside in favor of a traditional workplace union election if 30 percent of the workers sign a petition requesting it.

Local 503 spokesperson Ed Hershey said having to run the union campaign a second time only made union supporters more determined. Farmington Centers honored its pledge to remain neutral during the campaign, Hershey said.

The two sides immediately returned to the bargaining table, where they are negotiating a first contract.

Carpenters go for Kitzhaber

The Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters endorsed John Kitzhaber for governor at its quarterly council delegate meeting Feb. 20.

"Job creation is our only priority this election cycle, and John Kitzhaber is the only candidate for governor that we trust to grow our economy," said Carpenters Political Director John Little. "We have known John for a long time and we trust him. He has always understood the needs of working families throughout the state."

The Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters represents over 20,000 carpenters, piledrivers, drywallers, millwrights, trade show workers, shipwrights, exterior/interior spe-

cialists, scaffold erectors, insulators and related craft workers.

The Carpenters were the top donor to Kitzhaber's 1998 re-election campaign.

Other unions supporting Kitzhaber are United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council, the Oregon State Council of Firefighters, and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48.

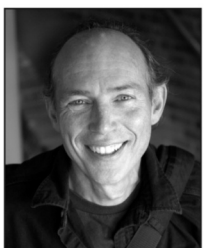
Obama taps SEIU's Andy Stern for new deficit cutting panel

Andy Stern, president of the Service Employees International Union, was named by President Barack Obama to a commission on cutting the federal deficit. The 18-member National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility was created by Obama to come up with recommendations for steps to reduce the federal deficit, which is forecast to hit a record \$1.6 trillion this year. The commission may recommend tax increases, spending cuts or a combination of both to reduce U.S. deficits.

Selected as co-chairs of the commission are former Democratic White House official Erskine Bowles and former Wyoming Republican Senator Alan Simpson.



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...Oregon Legislature gets mixed reviews from labor

(From Page 1)

helps nearly 19,000 Oregonians who would otherwise have exhausted their benefits at the end of March, at a cost of \$19 million to the unemployment insurance trust fund.

• Extension of collective bargaining rights and workers' compensation protection to a new group of home care workers. Sponsored by State Rep. Michael Dembrow (D-Portland), the bill makes the Home Care Commission the employer of record for several thousand workers who are paid by the state to provide in-home care for mentally ill and developmentally disabled individuals and medically-fragile children. The bill was a top priority for Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 503.

American Federation of Teachers—Oregon passed its top priority bill — SB 989. The bill eliminates the confusing double ballot in Oregon University System (OUS) faculty representation elections. Currently, faculty employed by the OUS must first vote to have representation, then vote again to designate a particular union for their representative.

Building trades unions also had some successes. The Legislature authorized bonds that will provide \$65 million to renovate the Transportation Building on the Capitol Mall and \$75 million for a 451-bed dormitory at the University of Oregon. And a bill backed by Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council (OS-BCTC) will require payment of the

prevailing wage rate on solar energy systems constructed on public property. OSBCTC Executive Secretary Bob Shiprack said the bill was a response to a 2008 ruling that workers installing rooftop solar panels on buildings owned by Multnomah County would not have to be paid prevailing wage. That's because the contract was set up as a power purchase agreement, with the contractor owning the panels and selling the power to the County. The newly-passed bill would eliminate any such end-runs around the prevailing wage requirement: If a panel is going on public property, workers installing it will earn the prevailing wage. All House and Senate Democrats voted for the change, while most Republicans voted against it. Republicans voting for it were: representatives Vicki Berger (Salem), Bill Kennemer (Oregon City) and Ron Maurer (Grants Pass); and senators Jason Atkinson (Central Point), Ted Ferrioli (John Day), Frank Morse (Albany), Bruce Starr (Hillsboro), and Jackie Winters (Salem).

Shiprack also applauded the Legislature for reforming the Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC). A bill passed that will give the Oregon Department of Energy discretion in whether to pre-approve the credit, and a mandate to consider many factors, including the number of jobs created.

There were also disappointments for the Building Trades: Critics of liquid natural gas opposed a bill to allow pipeline developers to apply for permits while still in negotiations with landowners, and it didn't get a hearing.

And a "Buy American" bill introduced in the Senate failed to get a vote. It would have required public construction projects to use U.S.-made steel, lumber, piping and drywall (unless the domestically-produced material is unavailable or 25 percent more expensive than imported material).

Shiprack also decried a move by the

Legislature to make up a budget shortfall by "sweeping" portions of unrelated special-purpose funds into the state's General Fund. The sweep took money out of several funds of interest to union members — including \$1.6 million from a Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) fund that pays for enforcement of the prevailing wage requirement.

Several other labor-positive proposals stalled.

State Rep. Brad Witt (D-Clatskanie) (who is also a union rep at United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555) had a bill calling for the Oregon Health Commission to study a "pay or play" system in which employers would either provide health insurance to employees or pay into a state insurance fund. The bill passed the House, but

died in committee after it couldn't find majority support in the Senate.

And a bill by Rep. Jules Bailey (D-Portland) to require the Columbia River Crossing I-5 bridge project to give preference to locally produced materials didn't get a floor vote.

Lawmakers ended the special session by referring to voters a constitutional change providing for annual legislative sessions — capped at 160 days in odd-numbered years and 35 days in even-numbered years.

Thus far, labor is neutral on the proposal. Shiprack said annual sessions would make it easier for the state to budget effectively, but expressed concern that the 35-day session would be too short to deliberate effectively on policy change bills. Voters will decide the issue in November.

Bill to fine-tune Worker Freedom Act fails to get out of committee

SALEM — Last year, the Oregon AFL-CIO managed to pass a nationally-noticed law that could strengthen workers' rights in workplace union organizing campaigns. This year, the labor federation asked the Legislature for some changes to the law, and fell flat in the Oregon Senate.

The law in question, known as the Worker Freedom Act, is intended to give workers the right to boycott so-called "captive audience" anti-union meetings. Employers commonly use the mandatory-attendance workplace sessions as a very effective way to squelch campaigns to unionize. But the new law says employers may not discipline workers for refusing to attend a meeting — if the meeting's purpose is to express employer views on religion, politics or whether to join a labor organization. That bill was to go into effect Jan. 1, but it's being challenged in federal court in a lawsuit filed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The suit argues that the law unconstitutionally restricts employer freedom of speech, and that states may not legislate on the subject of private sector unionization, because that is pre-empted by a federal law, the National Labor Relations Act.

In the February special session, the Oregon AFL-CIO went back to Oregon lawmakers with a bill to clarify that religious employers are exempt from the law, to change the formula for calculating the penalty when employers violate the law, and to remove the definition of labor organization from the bill. When the labor federation's bill went to the floor of the House, Republicans Kevin Cameron (Salem) and Kim Thatcher (Keizer) pushed an alternate proposal — to repeal the Worker Freedom Act altogether. That failed on a straight party-line vote, with all 36 Democrats opposed and all 24 Republicans in favor. Next the AFL-CIO's bill got a vote, and passed 34-26, with two Democrats opposed: Betty Comp of Woodburn and Suzanne Van Orman of Hood River. But then in the Senate, labor couldn't find 16 senators to pledge support for the bill, even though Democrats have an 18-12 majority.

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...DeFazio speaks out on ARRA

(From Page 1)

prevailing wage on federally-funded construction projects.] I also think the money that went to keep teachers working and educate our kids I look at as an investment in the future, and it preserved a lot of jobs.

But the tax cuts and a bunch of other stuff that was just tossed in with no thought, like \$30 billion for health care information technology ... what was that doing in a [recovery] bill?

Right. Raising the cap that prevents the alternative minimum income tax from pinching middle-income families was in there, and that's something Congress does every year. And the Making Work Pay tax credit — that was from Obama's 2008 campaign, which wasn't presented at the time as a stimulus proposal.

I had staff say to me, "Well, he can say he gave the tax cut he promised." I said, "Well, no one's going to know they got it, it's not going to put anybody back to work, and if you don't have a job, it isn't going to help you."

Of course, people might not know they got the tax cut but spend it anyway.

It was designed to trick people into spending it. This was the brilliant Larry Summers idea. (Summers is director of the White House National Economic Council.) He came to the [Democratic] caucus and bragged about it. He said, "Look, we're not going to do what they did back in the Bush era and send people a check for \$400. They might save it. They might use it to pay down their debt. We want them to consume, because that will put people back to work." Buying junk made in China at Walmart is going to put people back to work, or a latte at Starbucks? That's what it amounts to: two coffee drinks or some other small item per week.

It seems the bill is aimed at almost everything but directly employing peo-

ple.

The Obama economic team thinks it's "old school" to invest in public infrastructure and put people to work rebuilding it. They wanted to do different things. We've got "Green Grid," whatever that is. Nobody's figured that out yet, and the Department of Energy has yet to spend any of the money. There was money for windmills made in China. That'll put a lot of Americans to work. In all, it was a mishmash, hurriedly thrown together. It could have been more targeted to produce a hell of a lot more jobs for a hell of a lot less money.

What's the verdict you're hearing from constituents? About the same?

There's no affinity for it. They don't know they got a tax cut, and they don't think it's had any impact. I mean, except for teachers. You can talk to teachers and ...

Yeah, I think some of the public employees do realize that the aid to the states prevented layoffs. But local building trades union business managers are saying by and large that they see little or no impact from the infrastructure spending.

Well, the other problem is it was all designed to be very short-term spending, under this theory that we had to get it out there right away. I said we need more money for infrastructure and we need to do more bigger projects. Rushing out with a bunch of projects that can be completed this construction season ... road resurfacing? Yes, the roads need resurfacing, but you get a lot fewer jobs per dollar doing something like road resurfacing as opposed to building a new light rail line and buying the rail cars and the steel for the rails under Buy America requirements, and Davis-Ba-



PETER DEFAZIO

con construction jobs. You would just have a much bigger multiplier effect.

At other times in U.S. history, bold projects were announced by the federal government. Particularly in the FDR era, that was an approach that put people back to work and galvanized public spirit. But it seems in this case, everything consists of little tiny grants. You had 23 federal agencies, all of which had their budgets plumped up by the stimulus act, with formulas to distribute it to the states. It's not quite as dramatic.

Well, there was no coherent vision, nothing to transform the society or make long-term investments that provide future benefits. I suggested maybe they would want to have an objective in transportation infrastructure, like rebuild all 160,000 bridges in the federal highway system that need either replacement or substantial rehabilitation. Or build a high-speed rail network over the next 20 years and [use the stimulus as]

a major down payment. Instead it

was a mishmash of things, some of which were good, many of which were marginal, and a good number of which were bad.

I'd think members of Congress would want to spend money on more projects that put people back to work. What's the holdup? Nervousness about the deficit? Why is there no move to free up resources by repealing

the three Bush tax cuts on the wealthy?

Obama's economic team is a Wall Street team. They don't really believe in the "real" economy. So we're having a very difficult time grinding any meaningful investments in the real economy out of these people. We're basically having a battle for the soul of the Democratic Party.

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Labor Council backs several city, county incumbents

The Northwest Oregon Labor Council on Feb. 22 endorsed several incumbents seeking re-election at the City of Portland, Multnomah County, and Clackamas County.

The list includes: City Commissioners Nick Fish and Dan Saltzman; Multnomah County Chair Ted Wheeler, Multnomah County Commissioner Jeff Cogen, and Clackamas County Commissioners Jim Bernard and Ann Lininger. Delegates also voted to support Rex Burkholder for president of Metro.

The labor council has already endorsed Duke Shepard for an open seat on the Metro Council. Shepard is political director of the Oregon AFL-CIO.

Saltzman and Burkholder face the stiffest challenges in the May primary. Six candidates have filed to run against Saltzman, who has served on the City Council since 1998. One opponent, Jesse Cornett, also interviewed with NOLC's Executive Board and turned in a candidate questionnaire.

Burkholder is one of three candidates vying for the open seat at Metro, where Burkholder currently serves as a commissioner.

During his endorsement interview, City Commissioner Fish made a pitch for building a baseball stadium for the minor league Portland Beavers in the Delta Park area. He described the location — which includes Portland International Raceway and the Portland Expo Center — as a “prime location for a new baseball stadium in Portland,” with easy access to the freeway and light rail.

Merritt Paulson owns the Portland Beavers baseball franchise. He recently reached a deal with the City to move the Beavers out of downtown's PGE Park to make room for a Major League Soccer franchise that he bought. PGE Park will soon undergo extensive renovations for the soccer team. Those renovations will be performed by union workers under a project labor agreement that Fish and Saltzman both supported.

Fish also talked about creating a recreation center at Delta Park similar to that of Tualatin Valley's. A large



Roofers say 'Shame on Walmart'

Russ Garnett, Travis Hopkins, and John VanEnige — members of Roofers Local 49 — staff an informational picket line Feb. 18 at the Walmart super store under construction in Cornelius. The anti-union retailer awarded the roofing contract to nonunion Mountain States Roofing of Idaho. “It's bad enough they hired nonunion,” Hopkins said. Roofers handed out more than 850 fliers to drivers as they were stopped at the corner stop light to let them know that area standard wages were not being paid on the project. The picketers said the nonunion roofing crew is paid around \$15 an hour. “With so many Oregonians out of work, it just burns me up that they hire from out of state,” Hopkins said. Half of the 450 members at Local 49 are out of work, many of them for longer than six months. The Walmart job will provide two dozen jobs for nearly three months. “We're trying to get work, but nobody seems to want to listen,” VanEnige added. So, for now, they continue collecting weekly unemployment insurance checks. Local 49 is asking union members to call Walmart and let them know they are unhappy with its use of out-of-state contractors and workers. The phone number is 1-800-925-6278.

chunk of land in that area is owned by developer Tom Moyer.

In Clackamas County, first-term Commissioner Bernard was asked about the crumbling Sellwood Bridge and what role the County will play in replacing it. Bernard said Clackamas County has the authority to increase its vehicle registration fee by \$10, with the increase dedicated to building a new bridge.

“We can pass it at the commission level — and we plan to do it,” Bernard told the Executive Board.

Replacing the Sellwood Bridge is estimated to cost \$330 million. Multnomah County has already increased its vehicle registration fee by \$19 (to raise \$127 million) and the City of Portland has committed \$100 million to the project. A \$10 increase in Clackamas County is expected to generate \$44 million toward bridge construction. The bridge is located in Multnomah County, but an estimated 60 percent of Clackamas County residents use it, the Execu-

utive Board was told.

During his interview, Multnomah County Commissioner Cogen said he supports a project labor agreement on the Sellwood Bridge project.

Marion, Polk, Yamhill Labor Council installs new officers

SALEM — McMinnville Steelworker Joe Munger was re-elected president of the Marion, Polk, Yamhill Counties Labor Council.

Munger, president of United Steelworkers Local 8378 and a melt shop worker at Cascade Steel Rolling Mills, will serve a second two-year term as president of the mid-Willamette Valley labor umbrella group, which consists of 21 local unions.

Other officers elected were: Vice President Kathy Bonogofski, Oregon School Employees Association Zone III director and chapter president at Willamette Education Service District; Secretary Treasurer Richard Swyers, a maintenance worker for the City of Salem Water Department and member of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 2067; and Recording Secretary Judy Sugnet, a retired OR-OSHA librarian (and current legislative aide to State Rep. Brad Witt) and member of Service Employees International Union Local 503.

Elected trustees were Omar Avina-Trejo, a union representative at United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555; Greg Creal, Central Electrical Training Center instructor and member of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 280; Monte Hansen, Cascade Steel crane operator and Steelworkers Local 8378 vice president; Rosalie Pedroza, Oregon State Hospital research analyst and SEIU Local 503

regional director; and Tim Roark, Social Security Administration employee and vice president of American Federation of Government Employees Local 3937.

Pedroza will also serve as the Labor Council's representative on the General Board and the Committee on Political Education for the Oregon AFL-CIO; Creal is the Labor Council's appointee to the Tri-County Enterprise Board.

The officers were sworn in at the group's Feb. 9 meeting.

For more about the labor council, go to or.aflcio.org/mpycle.

AFSCME Local 88 backs Multnomah County incumbents

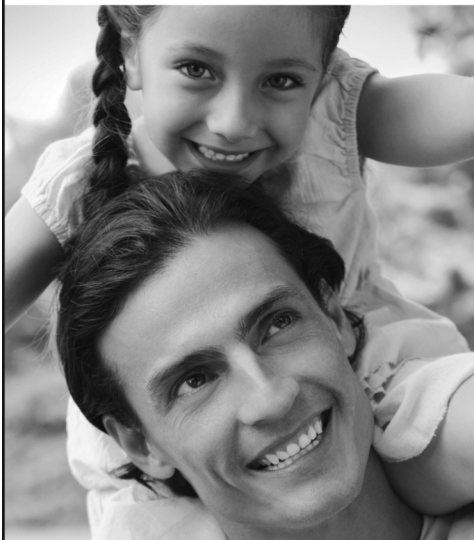
Multnomah County Employees Local 88 has endorsed the re-election of County Chair Ted Wheeler, County Commissioner Jeff Cogen and County Auditor Steve March.

Local 88, an affiliate of the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 88, represents nearly 2,800 county workers.

The union also endorsed Dan Staton for an open seat for County Sheriff.

“AFSCME Local 88 will work hard to see that all endorsed candidates become elected,” said Union President Michael Hanna.

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