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Portland, Oregon

Measures 66 and 67 win in a landslide

When votes were counted Jan. 26, it wasn't even close: The first time they've been asked to decide such a question, Oregonians said "yes" by a lopsided margin to raising taxes on corporations and the state's richest individuals.

Measure 66 — which increases the income tax rate by up to 2 percent on the top 2.5 percent of income earners — passed with 54 percent support.

Measure 67 — which raises the corporate minimum to \$150 a year and bumps up the corporate profits tax as much as 1.3 percent — got 53 percent support.

The increases were approved by the Oregon Legislature last June, but were referred to voters by a business-funded coalition that hired paid signature gatherers. The increases are forecasted to raise \$733 million over two years, which will pay for schools, social services and public safety.

Businesses and rich individuals contributed over \$4.5 million to defeat the tax increases, and filled the airwaves with ominous-sounding ads warning of job losses. Business groups — including some that last year urged lawmakers



At an election night party at Portland's Wonder Ballroom, supporters react to news that Ballot Measures 66 and 67 were approved by a sizable margin. Pictured in the center are State Sen. Jackie Dingfelder (D-Portland), Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain, and State Sen. Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland).

to raise taxes across the board to prevent budget cuts — now argued that a recession is the wrong time to raise taxes (on them).

But the "no" campaign was more than countered by union money and volunteers. Backed by a coalition that included unions, PTAs, and the AARP, the mostly-volunteer Vote Yes For Oregon campaign knocked on over 300,000 doors and called over a million registered voters. The "yes" campaign also raised over \$6.8 million, which paid for door-to-door canvasses and television ads pointing out that many banks and other big corporations have been paying just \$10 a year in state income tax.

The final percentage in favor of the tax increases was about the same level that polls showed last summer — before either campaign got under way.

The most decisive moment in the campaign, campaign manager Kevin Looer told the Labor Press, took place before it began, when Democratic legislators faced down corporate lobbyists

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Labor's message to lawmakers: 'Good Jobs, Now!'

Connie Jones was laid off in October 2009 as a building plans examiner for the City of Portland's Bureau of Development Services. Although she holds a master's degree in architecture, the 56-year-old member of AFSCME Local 189 has been unable to find a job in her field.

Jakob Juntunen, 29, is an electrical apprentice specializing in the solar industry. He worked only six months last year, resulting in the loss of health insurance for his young family.

And single mom Rachel Santos, 45, a member of Laborers Local 296, worked so little last year that she lost her home, car, and good credit standing. She is discouraged, as hopes for work appear to be many, many months away.

These and other stories were heard over and over last month during a three-city "Good Jobs Now" forum sponsored by the Oregon AFL-CIO.

"No one needs to tell America's families that unemployment and underemployment are at crisis levels," said Tom Chamberlain, president of the

state labor federation at a gathering in Portland, where a half-dozen unemployed union members told their stories to Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian, State Rep. Tina Kotek, and Ed Hall, labor liaison to U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley.

Similar forums were held Jan. 14 in Albany and Jan. 20 in Bend with unemployed workers and representatives from Senator Merkley's and Congressman Peter DeFazio's offices, and Albany Mayor Sharon Konopa.

Chamberlain said the recovery package passed in 2009 helped create or save 1 million jobs, but because there was a deficit of more than 10 million jobs since the recession began, more needs to be done.

"We need jobs — and we need them now," Chamberlain said. "Wall Street has gotten its bailouts. Now it's time for Main Street to get some immediate help."

That's why labor unions are taking the lead pushing lawmakers at the state and federal level to move quickly to en-

act a robust jobs program. The national AFL-CIO has launched a "Good Jobs Now!" campaign that calls on Congress and the Obama Administration to take five steps now to care for the jobless and put America back to work.

The plan includes fixing America's crumbling schools, bridges and roads; hiring community banks to lend left-over bank bailout funds directly to

small businesses that will in turn be used to create jobs; investing in new energy systems and green technology; and increasing aid to state and local governments to help people who have lost their jobs.

Chamberlain said a \$500 billion transportation bill currently before Congress also would go a long way towards boosting the economy. "These are the

types of measures we need to get this country back on its feet," he said.

"There are so many productive people sitting on the sidelines right now," said Juntunen, a member of IBEW Local 48. "A jobs bill costs money, but the cost is far greater if we do nothing. Only a deep investment toward an en-

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'Vote Your Jobs' rally slated at State Capitol WEDNESDAY FEB. 10

SALEM — Building trades unions will hold a "Vote Your Jobs" rally on the front steps of the State Capitol at noon, Wednesday, Feb. 10.

All workers are invited to attend.

"It's an election year, and we're tired of supporting job-killing politicians," said John Endicott, business manager of Plumbers and Fitters Local 290, who is coordinating the event with the Ore-

gon State Building Trades Council.

Endicott listed several proposed projects — a number of them private-sector involving no tax dollars — that are currently hung up by lawsuits and/or red tape. They include liquid natural gas terminals along the Oregon Coast, a tribal gaming casino in the Columbia Gorge, and a new Interstate 5 bridge to replace the old one between

Oregon and Washington.

"Our message to lawmakers is, 'we're ready, willing and trained to go to work. We just need the jobs,'" Endicott said.

Local 290 and Electrical Workers Local 48 are making arrangements for bus transportation to Salem, if needed.

For more information, call Ron Murray at 971-340-3940.

UFCW Local 555 inks Portland grocery pacts

After 18 months of contentious bargaining, grocery workers, meat cutters and checkout clerks in the Portland metropolitan area ratified new collective bargaining agreements Jan. 23 with their employers — Kroger, Albertsons, and Safeway.

The roughly 6,000 workers are members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555. Grocers bargain jointly as Food Employers Inc. on separate contracts representing grocery workers, and meat cutters at all stores, as well as central checkout clerks (CCK) at Fred Meyer, which is owned by Kroger.

Union officials did not release the exact vote count, but said the grocery contract passed on Jan. 23 by a 90 percent margin, the meat cutters contract passed by an 84 percent margin, and CCK passed by an 85 percent margin.

Several smaller independent stores such as Kroger-owned QFC will come in under the terms of the new pact.

The contract is retroactive to July 26, 2008. The new expiration date is July 28, 2012.

Journey-level employees will receive a lump-sum payment of 25 cents for every hour worked over the past 12 months, with apprentices receiving 15 cents an hour over the same time period. Effective Feb. 1, 2010, journey-level employees will get a pay raise of 25 cents an hour, followed the next year by a lump-sum payment of 25 cents for every hour worked. Journey-level employees will get another quarter an hour on their check starting Feb. 1, 2012.

Apprentices will receive wage step increases of up to 75 cents per hour over the term of the contract.

Employers agreed to pick up the first 7.3 percent increase each year in health insurance premiums. Any increases over that amount will be paid by workers.

Employees may volunteer to work Christmas Day, but can't be scheduled to work.

"The entire labor community helped

us get this contract," Steve Konopa, Local 555 grievance director, told delegates at the Jan. 25 Northwest Oregon Labor Council meeting. "We can't thank you enough."

In a separate vote held Jan. 29, grocery workers and meat cutters at Safeway stores in Bend, Redmond and Madras ratified new contracts. There are approximately 200 union members involved.

"It's slightly different from Portland's, but it follows basically the same pattern," said Local 555 Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Anderson.

Portland and Central Oregon bargaining teams negotiated together for several months prior to the ratification voting.

Talks will continue for grocery, meat and CCK employees at Fred Meyer and Albertsons stores in Bend, Redmond and Madras. Because bargaining is ongoing, union officials did not release ratification vote numbers at Safeway.

Meantime, a separate five-year contract covering "non-food" retail workers at Portland area Fred Meyer stores expires in June. And non-food employees at The Dalles Fred Meyer still are seeking a first contract. They voted overwhelmingly to be represented by Local 555 in November 2007.

Grocery workers at The Dalles Fred



Unions promote home fire safety at hockey game

Apprentices from Plumbers and Fitters Local 290 celebrate a 1-0 "Broom Ball" hockey game victory over members of Fire Fighters Local 43 Jan. 9 at Portland's Memorial Coliseum. The annual event is held between periods of a Portland Winter Hawks game and is used to promote residential fire sprinkler safety, said Jed Scheuermann, assistant training coordinator for Local 290. The union offers a training program for residential fire sprinkler system installation that is endorsed by the Portland Fire Bureau and the Oregon Building Codes Division. In Broom Ball, contestants don tennis shoes and plastic brooms and try to slap a foam ball into the net. The firefighters have held the Broom Ball Cup for the past three years after sloshing to 0-0 ties in 2008 and 2009. This year, with just seconds remaining, apprentice David Allen-Schublin scored the winning goal. Local 290 team members from left to right are: Jaimie Ortiz (hardhat), Marcus Morris, Brian Decklar, Chris Flowers (white hardhat), David Allen-Schublin, Gerald Rasmussen, Jesse Pappas, Tomahawk, and Zach Wright.



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...Oregon AFL-CIO launches Good Jobs Now! campaign

(From Page 1)

ergy economy, toward a first-rate infrastructure, can we expect to have a real economic recovery.

“The stimulus recovery effort, it’s a good first step, but more needs to be done,” Juntunen continued. “And it shouldn’t be a system that creates 10 layers of contracting schemes that gives money to everyone except the workers who are actually out there doing the work.”

Jones was one of seven City planners in her department to lose their job. She said two have found work — one took a 30 percent pay cut at a temp job that ends in June. The other, who was desperate for health insurance because he and his wife were expecting a baby, took a 50 percent pay cut, also for a temp job ending in June.

Jones has taken several classes through WorkSource Oregon to try to obtain funding for skills upgrade courses, but has been stymied from filling out the skills upgrade form because it requires a person to include two job announcements in need of a worker with the missing skill set.

“When there are no job announcements, it becomes impossible to meet this requirement,” she said.

Santos said that since losing her home and car, she has found it difficult to find work *anywhere* because prospective employers look at applicants’ credit histories. Car insurance is the same, with insurers jacking up premiums if drivers have poor credit.



Oregon State Rep. Lisa Kotek (left) listens to story of unemplyed Laborer's apprentice Rachel Santos during a "Good Jobs Now" roundtable discussion Jan. 19 sponsored by the Oregon AFL-CIO. A half-dozen jobless union members described to area politicians the problems they are facing without jobs. The AFL-CIO is lobbying Congress and local lawmakers to devote more resources to create jobs over the short-term.

“I’ve never been in an accident. I’ve always paid my bills on time. I’ve had no issues at all until work went away,” she said.

After listening to their stories, Rep. Kotek said the agenda for the Oregon Legislature’s February special session “is all about jobs. We have a limited set of tools, but we’re looking at ways to get monies out into the economy. Having another jobs package from the fed-

eral government will be extremely helpful.”

Kotek said she and State Sen. Diane Rosenbaum will introduce a bill to end employers’ use of credit histories when hiring. The Job Applicant Fairness Act would restrict employers’ access to a job applicant’s credit report, with limited exceptions; give workers a fair chance to get hired based on qualifications not credit history; and preserve

employers’ right to check criminal records and all other job-related reference checks.

Labor Commissioner Avakian praised labor’s five-point plan. “The AFL-CIO plan is smart to say you’ve got to extend unemployment insurance and other benefits for a longer period of time, because we’re not going to have a fast solution. It’s an impossibility.”

Avakian blamed two decades of “complete disinvestment” by federal and state governments both in job training and education.

“We’ve passed things like NAFTA that gives an incentive to ship jobs overseas so (workers) don’t have as many options here. We don’t fund our job training and our public education programs. We’ve eliminated shop classes from our schools. There’s a series of things we’ve done for almost 20 years now that put folks like you — when you lose a job — in a position that you really don’t have other places to turn because the jobs just aren’t there. And now we’re doing everything we can to play catch up.”

Avakian said stimulus-backed job training programs that have developed since the recession hit will benefit Oregon and the U.S. in the long term. “But it makes it much more difficult in the short term to find all of you jobs when

we need them now,” he said.

Chamberlain said private industry won’t be able to create jobs quickly enough to put folks back to work, which is why government has to devote more resources to productivity-enhancing investments.

“We need to put people back to work doing real work — tutoring kids, working in woods — real jobs with real pay needs to be part of the recovery plan,” he said.

The AFL-CIO is encouraging all union members and their families to write or call their state and congressional representatives and ask them to support jobs programs.

In Congress, the Jobs for Main Street Act, HR 2847, has been passed by the House and is awaiting action in the Senate. The bill would do most of the things the AFL-CIO has called for, although not for the length of time union officials would like to see. For instance, HR 2847 would extend COBRA health insurance and unemployment insurance for six months. The AFL-CIO plan calls for a 12-month extension.

Chamberlain said most of the funds in the bill have already been appropriated — as they are left over bank bailout (TARP) funds and not new debt.

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AG tells Labor Law crowd he will fight hard to defend Worker Freedom Act

A sold out crowd of nearly 275 people jammed the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48 hall Jan. 29 for the 14th annual Oregon Labor Law Conference.

The daylong event, coordinated by Norm Malbin, general counsel for IBEW Local 48, was co-sponsored by the Oregon AFL-CIO, Oregon State and Columbia-Pacific Building and Construction Trades Councils, Northwest Oregon Labor Council, the Labor Education and Research Center at the University of Oregon, and the Center for Worker Rights.

The conference is geared for union officers and representatives. Workshops focused on how to prepare for arbitrations, creative organizing strategies, grievance mediation, recordkeeping, updates on the Family Medical Leave Act, and a class on how to handle employers who discipline employees for off-duty misconduct.

Speakers included Oregon Attorney General John Kroger; Dr. John Lund, deputy assistant secretary for the U.S. Department of Labor's Labor-Management Programs; R. Bruce Edgington,

district director of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Labor-Management Standards; Richard Ahearn, regional director of the National Labor



Dr. John Lund, deputy assistant secretary at the U.S. Department of Labor, gives keynote address during lunch at Oregon Labor Law Conference.

Relations Board; Darrell Clark, a commissioner with the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, college professors, several labor attorneys, and one management attorney, who gave an update on recent employment law court decisions.

Kroger told a luncheon audience that the AG's office will do everything in its

power to defend the State of Oregon against a lawsuit filed by Associated Oregon Industries (AOI) and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce that would rescind the Worker Freedom Act from becoming law.

Senate Bill 519 — the Worker Freedom Act — was labor's top priority bill at the Oregon Legislature last session. The new law prevents employers from punishing workers who opt-out of mandatory meetings on topics such as politics, religion and union organizing.

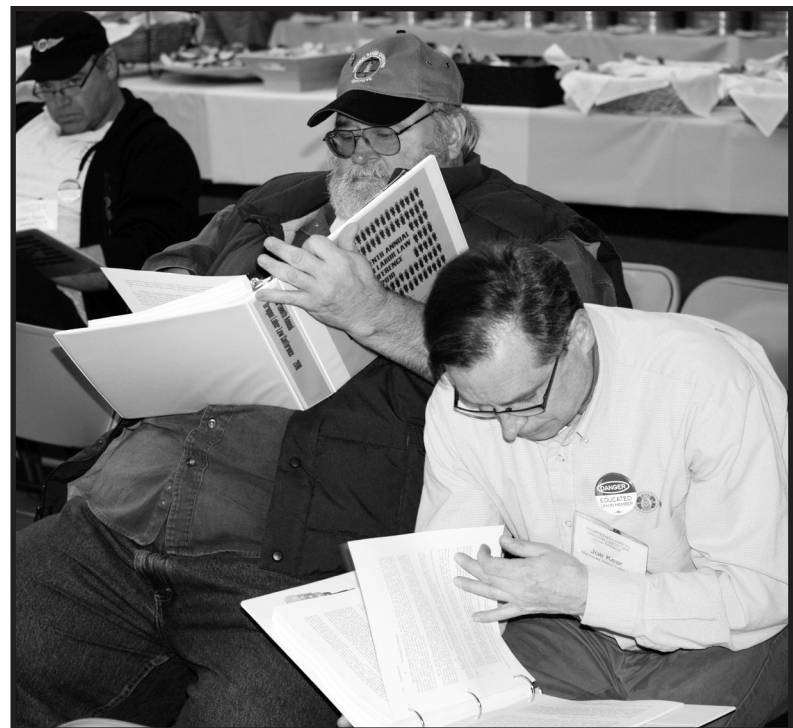
Oregon is the first state to pass such a law. It was to take affect Jan. 1.

The AOI lawsuit specifies Laborers Local 296 and Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian as defendants.

AOI and the U.S. Chamber claim SB 519 violates federal law and the First Amendment.

"We've put our very best lawyers on the case," Kroger said, "and we're going to fight it extremely hard."

Kroger said because of its national importance, his office is working closely with attorneys at the national



Terry Cook (left) of Machinists Lodge 1432 and Joe Kear, a business representative of Machinists District Lodge 24, scan through 213-page packet handed out at the Oregon Labor Law Conference Jan. 29 in Portland.

AFL-CIO, not only to coordinate strategy on defending the statute, but also to work on potential modifications in the next legislative session to make it that much more secure from future challenges in the courts.

"I feel very confident that we're going to win this case," Kroger said.

In the morning plenary session,

management attorney Rick Liebman of Barran Liebman LLP said that in his view, the Worker Freedom Act preempts the National Labor Relations Act.

"A lot of money is being poured into this lawsuit by both sides," Liebman said, further predicting that the case will wind up at the U.S. Supreme Court.

Driving in Oregon? Keep your hands off your phone

Oregon's new ban on cell phone use while driving went into effect Jan. 1. The minimum fine is \$142, and it's a primary offense, which means police can pull you over just for talking or texting on a cell phone.

The ban has exceptions. The biggest one is that drivers can talk on a cell phone if they use a hands-free accessory such as an earpiece or headset — if they're 18 or over. Under 18, no cell

phone use is allowed while driving.

The point is that a person should be able to drive without distraction, and be able to maintain both hands on the steering wheel. The new law is aimed at making the roads safer for everyone. In Oregon, drivers talking on cell phones were involved in more than 1,660 vehicle crashes and 21 fatalities from 2003 through 2008, according to the Oregon Department of Transporta-

tion (ODOT). At least six other states — including Washington and California — ban or severely limit using cell phones while driving.

The new law also has exceptions for drivers of emergency vehicles, drivers who are calling to report an emergency situation if no one else in the car can do that, and drivers talking on cell phones for the purpose of agricultural operations. The new law doesn't apply to CB radios, which have long been used by some workers, especially truckers, who must communicate with dispatchers.

And there's an exception for "a person operating a motor vehicle in the scope of the person's employment, if operation of the motor vehicle is necessary for the person's job." That work-related exception may be pretty hard for

police to interpret. Simply commuting to work won't trigger the exception, but many other workers who must drive a vehicle and communicate with employers might fall under it. Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Safety Division spokesperson Shelley Snow said it's likely police will issue tickets, and traffic court judges will be the ones to interpret the exception.

Violating the law is a Class D traffic offense. That means it's the lowest level violation, but it could still affect a driver's ability to hold a commercial drivers license if there are other more serious violations on their record.

Many employers already provide hands-free devices, or, like UPS, have existing no-cell-phone-use policies. ODOT told its own employees to use

hand-free accessories, even if they qualify for an exemption.

Technically, there's also an exception for a person while they're activating or deactivating the device, i.e., making or taking a call. Problem is, to a police officer, that can look like texting, and if it looks like you're breaking the law, an officer will pull you over.

If they're not sure about the law, Snow advised drivers to err on the side of safety, and pull over before talking, though not on the side of a highway, which isn't safe.

"If you need to make or take a call, go to a rest area or parking lot. The same goes for text messaging. Don't do it while you're on the road, even at a stoplight. Driving is complex. It's dangerous. You should pay attention to your driving."

At the 14th annual Oregon Labor Law Conference hosted by organized labor, employment attorney Rick Liebman recommended that anyone who works at a union as an employee get a hands-free device for their phone.

"If you get a ticket, it's on you. If you have an accident, it's on you and your employer. Get hands-free," he said.

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Portland parking meter techs win fight against outsourcing

By DON McINTOSH
Associate Editor

Six City of Portland parking meter technicians are about to get \$28,300 each. That's the penalty the City was ordered to pay for trampling their union contract, which was supposed to prevent outsourcing of their work.

Laborers Local 483, the union that represents the parking meter techs, warned more than three years ago that the City would be breaking its union contract if it paid a private company to upgrade city-owned parking pay stations — work similar to what the city employees had previously done.

City Council ignored the warning and approved the outsourced upgrade in November 2006. The union filed grievances, and was vindicated in binding arbitration.

As detailed in the December 2009 arbitrator's ruling, hearing transcripts, and interviews, Local 483 did everything it could to defend workers' contract rights, while the City tried to hide the outsourcing from the union, and then dug in its heels with multiple and contradictory legal arguments.

Nothing smelled right about the decision to contract this work out, said Local 483 Business Manager Richard Beetle. And it smelled worse and worse when the Portland Tribune and other newspapers began scrutinizing the City parking operation in a series of articles in 2008.

The collective bargaining agreement between the City of Portland and the seven-union District Council of Trade Unions (DCTU) is a model for its strong protections against privatization. Since 1976, a clause in the contract has said the City can't contract out work done by members of the bargaining unit, unless it can show that it will result in reduced costs. And those cost savings can't be the result of paying private sector workers lower wages and benefits. There's an exception: The City can contract out work that has previously been contracted out. But even then, the union has to be given 10 days notice and a reasonable opportunity to discuss the matter, allowing it to make alternate proposals on how to do the work.

None of those requirements were followed when the City outsourced an upgrade of its ultra-modern parking meters in late 2006.

For decades, in-house parking meter technicians had repaired and maintained the City's coin-fed single-space mechanical parking meters. Then in 2002, Portland became the first U.S. city to install the new "SmartMeters" — solar-powered electronic pay stations that accept coins and debit/credit cards, and print out sticker receipts that drivers affix to vehicles. Working with manufacturer Parkeon, the City's techs learned how to repair and maintain the new machines. They became expert enough that they completed a system-wide upgrade in 2004, ahead of schedule and under budget.

But in 2006, parking managers de-



It took three years, but six City of Portland parking meter technicians were vindicated in December when an arbitrator ruled the City had broken their union contract and outsourced their work. Pictured from left to right, Laborers Local 483 members Tam Nguyen, Carla Hales, Molly M. Twohy, K. Dean Lucas, and Wayne Lawler. Not pictured is Ben Capps, also in the group.

termined that the City could cut the bankcard fees it pays for each transaction if it replaced a firmware component in to enable real-time credit card authorization.

No one ever notified the union that the City intended to have a contractor do the work. But parking meter techs became suspicious when a manager directed one of them to deliver two meters to the premises of a private company, "so [they] could learn how to work on them."

A workplace union steward called then-Local 483 Field Representative Michael Dehner (now a rep for Oregon AFSCME). Dehner fired off a letter Oct. 18, 2006 asking if the city was considering contracting out an upgrade. As the arbitrator later put it, "the City not only failed to notify the union ... it affirmatively misled the union," and "disingenuously claimed confusion about what the union wanted."

Weeks later, Dehner was reading the

agenda for the upcoming Nov. 14 City Council meeting when he saw an item — approval of a three-year \$1.3 million contract with Toronto-based Precise ParkLink to upgrade downtown SmartMeters. A schedule conflict kept Dehner from attending, but he submit-

ted a letter to Council, warning they would be violating the union contract if they approved the deal. No response.

Precise ParkLink was approved, and it subcontracted with a local company, FeatherLite, to do the work. FeatherLite had an existing contract with the City to store and deliver the meters' adhesive paper, but had no special qualifications or experience working on parking meters.

"It was maddening," Dehner said. "The City had already invested in training our people, and yet here it was attempting to take work away from highly-trained, well-qualified and dedicated public servants, and hand it to a corporate entity that was trying to do it very inexpensively."

FeatherLite hired two workers, and got to work in Spring 2007 — removing meters, switching out components, and re-installing the meters.

City parking meter techs say problems began with the very first meter FeatherLite worked on. Re-installed machines were improperly anchored to the sidewalk, missing parts, and put back together wrong. The City techs took pictures of machines that had been certified by the contractor as in work-

ing order, and displayed them on a "wall of shame" at their workshop. An improperly installed cable in one machine prevented insertion of credit cards. In another, the paper wasn't fed to where it could print a receipt. Protective boots on batteries were missing, putting a machine at risk of short-circuit.

And FeatherLite wasn't returning machines to the same locations they were removed from. That rendered useless five years worth of machine-specific maintenance records the City techs had written on cards stored in each SmartMeter. It also caused confusion for customers. Machines would have stickers that said "one-hour parking" on blocks where street signs said there was three-hour parking.

The City parking meter techs protested, all six signing a letter to then-Commissioner Sam Adams complaining that they were having to spend city resources repairing work the contractors had done improperly. Union representatives set up a meeting with Adams and labor liaison Terry Richardson, at which techs showed the photographs and explained what was going on. Nothing changed. Techs were told they would be

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The raffle and Poker Run are sponsored by Unions for Kids, a non-profit, all-volunteer organization.

All proceeds go to Doernbecher Children's Hospital

Register and/or donate online at www.unionsforkids.org



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Official Notices

BOILERMAKERS 500

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

BRICKLAYERS AND ALLIED CRAFTWORKERS 1

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

CEMENT MASONS 555

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

CENTRAL OREGON LABOR COUNCIL

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

CLARK, SKAMANIA & W. KLICKITAT COUNTIES LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 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, Feb. 9 and Feb. 16, at Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th, Portland.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Electrical Workers Minority Caucus meets 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 9, in the Executive Boardroom.

Sound and Communication Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 10, in the Meeting Hall.

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

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

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

Wasco Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 10, at Ben-eventi's Pizza, 201 Stueben, Bingen, WA.

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

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays, Feb. 17 and March 3, in the Executive Boardroom.

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

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

General Membership Meeting meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 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, Feb. 27, in the Meeting Hall.

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

DEATH ASSESSMENTS: The February 2010 assessment is \$1.50. There were no deaths to report during the last period. 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, Feb. 11, at the IBEW/UA Training Center, 2161 SW First St., Redmond.

Joint Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 18, at 33309 Hwy 99E, Tangent.

Executive Board meets 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 3, at the 32969 Hwy. 99E, Tangent.

ELEVATOR CONSTRUCTORS 23

Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 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, March 3, at 2807 NW Fruit Valley Rd., Vancouver.

FIRE FIGHTERS 1660

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

GLASS WORKERS 740

Eugene area members meet 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 8, at Best Western Grand Manor Inn, 971 Kruse Way, Springfield.

Salem area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 9, at Candalaria Terrace, Suite 204, 2659 Commercial St. SE.

INSULATORS 36

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

IRON WORKERS 29

Members meet 7 p.m., Thursday, March 4, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir., #200, Portland.

IRON WORKERS SHOPMEN 516

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11, 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir., #300, Portland.

LABOR ROUNDTABLE OF SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

Delegates meet 8 a.m. Friday, Feb. 12, at Hometown Buffet, 7809-B Vancouver Plaza Dr., Vancouver, Wash.

LABORERS 320

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

LABORERS/VANCOUVER 335

Members meet 7 p.m. Monday, March 1, preceded by a 6:15 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at the Vancouver Labor Center, 2212 NE Andresen Rd., Vanc., Wash.

LABORERS 483

Municipal Employees
Members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 16, at the Musicians Hall, 325 NE 20th Ave., Portland.

LANE COUNTY LABOR COUNCIL

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

LANE, COOS, CURRY & DOUGLAS BUILDING TRADES

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

LINOLEUM LAYERS 1236

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 25, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

PLEASE NOTE: This meeting is 'SPECIAL CALL' to determine ballot options for the April 1 wage increase allocation. Vote scheduled for March 25.

MARION-POLK-YAMHILL LABOR COUNCIL

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

METAL TRADES COUNCIL

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 11. Delegates meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 23.

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

MID-COLUMBIA LABOR COUNCIL

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

MILLWRIGHTS & MACHINERY ERECTORS 711

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 27, 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, Feb. 18, 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, Feb. 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.

OPERATING ENGINEERS 701

District 1 & 5 members meet 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 5, at Gladstone Union Hall, 555 E. First St., Gladstone.

District 3 members meet 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 9, at North Bend/Coos Bay Labor Center, 3427 Ash St., North Bend.

District 3 members meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 10, at Marriott Courtyard, 600 Airport Rd., Medford. (NOTE NEW LOCATION)

District 2 members meet 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11, at the Comfort Suites, 969 Kruse Way, Springfield.

District 1 members meet 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 16, at Longview Electricians Hall, 1145 Commerce Ave., Longview.

District 4 members meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 17, at Comfort Inn, 351 Lone Pine Dr., The Dalles. (NOTE NEW LOCATION)

District 4 members meet 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 18,

at DTC Office, 148 Main St., Hermiston.

PAINTERS & DRYWALL FINISHERS 10

Members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 17, at the Asbestos Hall at 11145 NE Sandy Blvd, Portland, OR.

Each member may have a chance to win payment of dues by attending the meeting each month. David Grycko would have had his dues paid for 4 months if he had been at the Jan. meeting.

ROOFERS & WATERPROOFERS 49

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11. Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, March 4.

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

SALEM BCTC

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Thursday, March 4, at the IBEW 280 Training Center, 33309 Hwy 99E, Tangent.

SHEET METAL WORKERS 16

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

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

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

Coos Bay area members meet 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 18, at Abby's Pizza, 997 First St., Coos Bay. NOTE TIME CHANGE.

Portland area VOC meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 3, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

SIGN PAINTERS & PAINT MAKERS 1094

Members meet 3:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 15, in the District Office, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

SOUTHERN OREGON CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL

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

SOUTHWESTERN OREGON CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Monday, March 1, at the Bay Area Labor Center, 3427 Ash, North Bend.

UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

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

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

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

Brookings area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 2, at Curry County Search and Rescue, 517 Railroad St., Brookings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

USW 1097

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

Motorcycle raffle under way, poker run slated June 12

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.

Since its inception in 2003, Unions for Kids has raised \$171,000.

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 sunlgo. 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 sponsors, donations of cash and prizes for a silent auction, and volunteering.

"This is a local multi-union event and the goal is to achieve participation from every local union group," said Lee Duncan, an IBEW Local 48 member and president of Unions for Kids.

Most Unions for Kids committee members have motorcycle raffle tickets available. Tickets can also be purchased at IBEW & United Workers Federal Credit Union, Teamsters Federal Credit Union, UFCW Northwest Credit Union (contact Heidi), and at all five branches of TLC Federal Credit Union on the Oregon Coast.

The motorcycle poker run is an 80-mile loop with five checkpoints for the bikers to draw their cards. Cash is paid to the rider with the high poker hand and low poker hand.

For more information or to register to participate in the poker run, go to <http://www.unionsforkids.org>.

Retiree Meeting Notices

ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS OREGON CHAPTER

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

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

CARPENTERS

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

ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Retirees, wives and friends meet Tuesday, Feb. 9, for a trip to Spirit Mountain Casino. Raz transportation leaves at 8 a.m. from the Milwaukie K-Mart, 13750 Se Johnson Rd., Milwaukie and returns at 4 p.m. Or leave from the Parkrose K-Mart at 8:15 a.m. and return at 4:30 p.m. For more information, call Glenn Hodgkinson at 503-656-0028.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS 280

Retirees meet between 11:45 a.m. and noon Monday, Feb. 8, at Hometown Buffet on Lancaster in Salem, in Lancaster Mall. If you have any questions, please give Don Ball a call at 541-327-3388.

GLASS WORKERS 740

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 18, at Izzy's Pizza, 1307 NE 102nd Ave., Portland.

IRON WORKERS 29

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

MILLWRIGHTS 711

Retirees meet noon Wednesday, Feb. 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, Feb. 8, in the North-

west Oregon Labor Council board room, at 1125 SE Madison, Portland.

OREGON AFSCME

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 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

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 11, at Lung Fung Restaurant, 2025 N. Lombard, Portland.

UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 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.

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

Labor bills in the mix as lawmakers return to Salem

SALEM — The Oregon Legislature began its special session Feb. 1, and representatives of organized labor will be in and out of the Capitol over the next three weeks with a wish list they want the Democratic leadership to support.

Lawmakers dodged a budget bullet Jan. 26, when Oregon voters approved a package of temporary and permanent tax increases on corporations and the wealthy. Because of that, legislators will get to focus this session on policy changes. Under the special rules, each state representative was allowed to introduce one bill, and each state senator two bills. A limited number of “committee bills” will also be introduced. Several bills will be of particular interest to organized labor.

A bill by State Sen. Diane Rosen-

baum (D-Portland) would curb employers from considering the credit rating of job applicants.

A bill by State Rep. Brad Witt (D-Clatskanie) (who is also a union rep at United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555) calls for study of a “pay or play” system of employer-based health insurance coverage: Employers would either provide health insurance to their employees or pay into a state insurance fund.

Rep. Jules Bailey (D-Portland) — continuing his focus on bills that marry jobs and environment — has a bill to require the Columbia River Crossing interstate bridge project to give preference to goods manufactured close by — and goods whose production will help the state meet greenhouse gas reduction targets.

A bill by Rep. Michael Dembrow (D-Portland) would require workers’ compensation protection for home care workers. Dembrow is an officer in American Federation of Teachers-Oregon.

AFT-Oregon will also push to change the law that gives college faculty a confusing “double ballot” when they try to unionize. Unlike other public employees, faculty must first vote if they want a union, and then vote to join a particular union.

Rep. Mitch Greenlick (D-Portland) is back with a proposed referral to voters of a constitutional amendment establishing the obligation of the state to ensure every legal resident has access to affordable health care. Greenlick has pushed the idea since 2006, and at one point led an initiative campaign to do it, but failed to collect enough signatures to make the ballot.

One bill, introduced by State Sen. Rick Metsger (D-Mt. Hood), might restrict labor’s ability to participate in politics. The bill would set campaign contribution limits for state office, and prohibit corporate and labor organizations from making contributions directly from their treasuries.

State Sen. Ginny Burdick (D-Portland) is sponsoring a bill, sure to be closely watched, that would reform

Oregon’s unique “kicker” tax refund. The kicker rule requires the state to send a refund check to individual and corporate taxpayers if state revenues exceed official projections by more than 2 percent — whereas the state must cut budgets if revenues come in under those projections. The practice, enshrined in the state constitution, puts a lot of pressure on state economists to correctly guess the future, and leaves state government very little wiggle room if the predictions are off.

Burdick’s proposal would move the threshold to 4 percent, and dedicate any surplus below that to the state’s rainy day fund.

The state’s Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC) is also up for reform. Since 2007, BETC has reimbursed up to half the cost when businesses install or manufacture wind turbines and solar panels, but the tax credit has been criticized as too generous and too indiscriminate: tens of millions of dollars in tax credits have been given away to companies that were arguably going to make investments in renewable energy technologies anyway — with no requirement that they create jobs, sell the power in Oregon, or even stay in the state.

Last year the Oregon AFL-CIO testified in favor of changes to BETC,

some of which were passed by legislators. But Gov. Ted Kulongoski vetoed the bill. Months later, a front-page exposé in *The Oregonian* revealed that lawmakers were intentionally misled about BETC’s projected cost. Kulongoski did an about face and called for changes to the program.

This month, lawmakers will consider a bill to transform BETC from a business-initiated entitlement to more of an instrument used sparingly to leverage renewable energy investment. It gives the Oregon Department of Energy tremendous discretion in whether to pre-approve the credit. The department would consider the number of jobs created and whether and how much of the credit is needed for a facility to be built, and it could lower or eliminate the BETC if it looked like the state is headed for a budget shortfall.

Most state legislatures meet annually, but Oregon’s has historically met every two years, except for emergency special sessions. This special session is the second in an attempt to start a regular non-emergency short session in the off-years. During the session the Legislature will take up a proposal to refer to voters this November a constitutional amendment requiring annual sessions.

Union households boost Brown in Massachusetts

Republican Scott Brown’s victory last month in the Massachusetts Senate race was lifted by strong support from union households, the *Wall Street Journal* reported.

A poll conducted on behalf of the AFL-CIO found that 49 percent of Massachusetts union households supported Brown, while 46 percent supported labor-endorsed Democrat Martha Coakley.

The poll conducted by Hart Research Associates surveyed 810 voters.

Karen Ackerman, the AFL-CIO’s political action director, told the *Wall Street Journal* that the poll results indicate “what we call a working-class revolt” in which voters were responding to the fact that no one was addressing their needs or interests.

“Union voters are like any other voters, and they respond to the environ-

ment around them” and who they think will be on their side and fight for them, Ackerman said. “What happened in Massachusetts is that working families did not see the Democratic candidate as being on their side.”

Guy Molyneux, a pollster with Hart Research Associates, said the poll showed “pretty strong evidence” of voters who worried the health care overhaul moving through Congress would tax their employer-provided benefits, even though President Obama had agreed to a deal that exempted union workers until 2018.

By 61 percent to 33 percent, the voters polled said they were picking the best candidate for Massachusetts rather than sending a message to Washington. Nearly two-thirds of the voters who elected Brown said they wanted him to work with Democrats in Washington.

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Electrical Workers Minority Caucus meets — and volunteers — in Portland

Oregon U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley told delegates to the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus Jan. 18 that he is pushing for energy retrofits to be a primary piece of any jobs bill that comes out of Congress in the next few months.

"We can put a lot of people to work re-building the buildings we have, saving a lot of energy, and saving a lot of money," Merkley said.

To achieve this, the bill must include financing assistance for residential and commercial building owners who cannot afford the upfront cost of a home renovation, but who could pay for it out of the savings they will see on their energy bill.

Merkley said financing assistance can allow federal dollars to be leveraged substantially farther than a rebate program. For example, appropriating \$2 billion for loan guarantees could allow \$20-\$40 billion in financing.

Electricians applauded the announcement. Electrical contractors have been hit hard by the Great Recession, with unemployment in the industry as high as 40 percent in some areas.

More than 350 delegates from throughout the country attended the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus convention Jan. 14-18 at the Benson Hotel in downtown Portland. This year's host was IBEW Local 48. The caucus serves as a support and networking system for minorities within the union, providing education and training.

On Jan 14, more than 125 volun-



Electricians Felicia Wiseman of IBEW Local 58 in Detroit and Jeff Thomas of IBEW Local 11 in Los Angeles troubleshoot electrical outlets at the Salvation Army in North Portland. Union electricians attending the National Conference of Electrical Workers Minority Caucus in Portland Jan. 14-18 fanned out across the city on Jan. 14 for a "day of service," in observance of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. The Salvation Army received new electrical receptacles in the kitchen and gymnasium, old and non-functioning receptacles were replaced, new circuits were added to the main circuit panel, and all circuits in the main panel were matched to their proper receptacles and locations in the building.

teers fanned out across the city for a "day of service" in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Volunteers ran electrical wiring, added electrical receptacles, updated and repaired electrical panels, painted, and more, said IBEW Local 48 President Eric Hayes, who helped coordinate the event.

The projects ranged from work at a food pantry to doing a service

on a 1940s church.

"I've been involved with this since 1996," said Marjorie Ramirez, a member of IBEW Local 48. "I think the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus has been doing volunteer work for a minimum of 20 years."

Caucus delegates also collected working cell phones, wall chargers, and batteries to donate to the Portland Women's Crisis Line.

Building Trades, Fire Fighters councils endorse Kitzhaber

The Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council and the Oregon State Firefighters Council have endorsed John Kitzhaber for governor of Oregon.

The OSBCTC represents 32 union locals in 21 crafts, including: asbestos workers, boilermakers, bricklayers, electricians, glaziers, ironworkers, laborers, floorcoverers, painters, plasterers, roofers, sheet metal workers, plumbers and pipefitters, cement masons, glassworkers, elevator constructors and teamsters.

"John Kitzhaber is the hands-down choice for anyone who cares about creating jobs and a better economic future for Oregon," said OSBCTC Executive Secretary Bob Shiprack. "Oregon's next governor will inherit a tough economic climate. John Kitzhaber is the only candidate for governor with a real track record of creating quality jobs and standing up for Oregon's middle class."

Oregon State Fire Fighters Council President Kelly Bach said as firefighters, "our job is to step into a crisis to rescue and protect the people in danger. Right now, Oregon needs the same thing from its next governor. John Kitzhaber has the on-the-job experience and character we need to create jobs, protect public safety, and stand up for front-line firefighters and all Oregon families."

The Oregon State Firefighters Council represents 3,000 members in 44 different locals.

Kitzhaber has already received endorsements from United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48.

Kitzhaber is a former two-term gov-

ernor. An emergency room physician from Roseburg by trade, he has also served in the Oregon House of Representatives and as the Oregon Senate president. In his career he enacted many progressive reforms, including the Oregon Health Plan, the Oregon Education Act for the 21st Century, the Oregon Children's Plan, and the Oregon Salmon Plan, and he helped establish Oregon's Statewide Trauma System.

Since leaving office in 2002, he has continued to work on health care reform, natural resource issues and energy policy, leading several nonprofit foundations and boards.

...Measures 66 and 67 pass

(From Page 1)

and voted for a populist package that raised taxes on corporations and the wealthy.

"It gave the electorate a really clear choice about being able to protect the things they care about but not put the burden on middle class families," Looper said.

"Oregonians looked beyond the lies and half-truths that were thrown at them," House Majority Leader Dave Hunt (D-Clackamas County) said at an election night celebration in Portland.

But without question, it was the involvement of unions — particularly public employee unions — that made the "yes" campaign competitive. Oregon Education Association contributed over \$2 million, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) nearly \$1.9 million; and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) \$1 million — half from Oregon AFSCME and half from the AFSCME international.

Oregon AFSCME also worked to counter the opposition ads. The union bought \$150,000 worth of radio spots to debunk the claim that state employees had received \$259 million in raises. Nine days before the mail ballot deadline, the "no" campaign surprised supporters with a wrap-around ad in the Sunday Oregonian; the ad made it seem like the paper itself was going out of its way to urge a "no" vote. Oregon AFSCME stepped up with \$20,000 to put its own wrap-around ad in the paper six days later. Both of the independent ad campaigns were paid primarily from a media grant the national union gave Oregon AFSCME last April.

After the vote, Looper said he got calls from people around the country wanting to talk about how the campaign was run and what it means for their states.

The Oregon vote result could embolden further moves in Oregon and elsewhere toward a tax system that asks more of business and the wealthy.

PGE proposes change or closure at Boardman coal plant

Portland General Electric, Oregon's largest investor-owned electric utility, announced Jan. 14 a proposal to close — or alter — its Boardman, Oregon, coal-burning electricity generating plant in 2020. PGE owns 65 percent of the 585-megawatt plant, which directly employs 110 workers, including about 80 members of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 125. The plant is the biggest source of power for PGE customers (24 percent), but is also the state's largest source of air pollution, including mercury and nitrogen oxide that contributes to haze in the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area. To comply with clean air regulations, PGE currently has to either close the plant in 2014 or install \$520 million to \$560 million worth of equipment to scrub the plant's emissions, in which case it could operate the plant until 2040.

The 2020 closure proposal is a kind of compromise proposal — PGE is ask-

ing to be allowed to install less expensive equipment that would reduce emissions less. The proposal will require buy-in from ratepayer groups and the approval of environmental regulators.

The Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) would have to approve closing the plant in 2020, because the shorter time frame for amortizing the emissions control investment could lead to increased rates for purchasers of electricity. And the Environmental Quality Commission would have to approve the proposal for less stringent emissions controls.

The Boardman plant has also been targeted by environmental groups as a big emitter of carbon dioxide, which contributes to global warming. PGE spokesperson Steve Corson acknowledged that the company faces a certain amount of financial risk if carbon comes to have price under future greenhouse gas controls.

Corson said PUC could sign off on

the 2020 proposal first half of this year, while the EQC, which is the rule-making body for the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) would have its say toward the end of the year. If agreement on an alternative plan can't be reached, PGE will continue to seek approval for installation of all required emissions controls and continued operation of the plant through 2040.

PGE also outlined an alternative to outright closure in 2020: The plant could be adapted to burning a still-in-development coal-like fuel made from wood or plant material. That could help PGE comply with a state law passed in 2007 that requires investor-owned utilities to generate 25 percent of their electricity from new renewable sources by 2025. Known as "renewable portfolio standard," it is spurring big growth in wind, as well as research and development of wave, geothermal, and biomass sources.

Though any change is years away,

Local 125 Political Affairs representative Marcy Putnam said the union is seeking to meet with PGE to discuss impacts. PGE is a major employer in sparsely-populated Morrow County, with not only Boardman but also the Coyote Springs natural gas electricity generating plant.

With 10 years notice, members will have a lots of options, Corson said.

For one, PGE is proposing construction of a new 300 to 500 megawatt natural gas plant at Carty Reservoir, adjacent to the Boardman plant. That is driven by increased demand — and the need for "wind-chaser" generation to compensate for the intermittent nature of wind generation. The plant would be similar to the 400-megawatt plant at Port Westward in Clatskanie.

Also, a new transmission line is being constructed to bring more power down the Gorge into Willamette Valley, from wind and the new natural gas plants in the works.

Bureau of Labor Statistics report:

Union membership dropped by 771,000 in 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C.— With the economy hemorrhaging jobs — almost 3.3 million jobs lost in 2009 — the latest figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) show union membership in 2009 dropped slightly, from 12.4 percent of the workforce to 12.3 percent.

Nationwide, union membership dropped by 771,000, to 15.3 million in 2009, according to the BLS.

The recession eliminated jobs across the private sector, but was felt most deeply in manufacturing, transportation and construction — the most heavily unionized sectors of the nation's economy.

"The loss in union membership," said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, "is another indicator of the terrible toll the economic crisis is taking on the nation's middle class — not just union members."

In the state-by-state breakdown, Washington ranked No. 4 in terms of union density in 2009, with the state's 574,000 union members accounting for 20.2 percent of the overall workforce. The union-density percentage rose

slightly from 19.8 percent in 2008, as total jobs in Washington dropped 65,000 and the number of union members dropped 4,000.

Oregon ranked 11th in union density, with its 250,000 union members accounting for 17 percent of the workforce (up 0.4 percent from 2008). Total jobs in Oregon dropped 95,000 and the number of union members dropped 9,000.

Only New York (25.2 percent), Hawaii (23.5 percent) and Alaska (22.3 percent) have higher unionization rates than Washington.

"While I'm very encouraged that Washington remains one of the most unionized states in the country, polls show that many more workers would like to gain a voice at work by forming a union, but they can't," said Rick Bender, president of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO. "Outdated labor laws allow employers to coerce, threaten and fire workers who support unionization, with relative impunity. That's why passage of the Employee Free Choice Act is so important."

The data on union membership

were collected as part of the Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a monthly sample survey of about 60,000 households that obtains information on employment among the nation's civilian noninstitutional population age 16 and over.

Some highlights about the union workforce in the BLS survey included:

- Unionized workers still far out-earn their nonunion colleagues, and the gap is widening. The median weekly salary for union members last year — the point at which half are above that dollar figure and half below — was \$908, up \$22 from the year before. The median for nonunion workers was \$710 in 2009, up \$19 from 2008.

- The "wage gap" between men and women is narrower for union members than for everyone else — and it's closing for union women while widening for nonunion women.

The median weekly wage for union women last year was \$840, almost 88 percent of the \$957 median for union men. In 2008, union women earned 86 percent of what union men earned. The median weekly wage gap among non-

union women versus nonunion men in 2009: \$628 to \$786. In 2009, nonunion women earned 79.9 percent of what nonunion men earned, down from 80.3 percent the year before.

- More public sector employees (7.9 million) belonged to a union than did private sector employees (7.4 million).

- Workers in education, training, and library occupations had the highest unionization rate at 38.1 percent.

- Black workers were more likely to be union members than were white, Asian, or Hispanic workers.

- Among states, New York had the highest union membership rate (25.2 percent) and North Carolina had the lowest rate (3.1 percent).

- The biggest absolute increases in union numbers from 2008 to 2009 were in the South: Texas (+59,000, to 508,000), Georgia (+26,000, to 177,000), Virginia (+20,000, to 166,000), and Louisiana (+19,000, to 99,000). Union densities in those states still were all under 6 percent.

- Women are catching up in union ranks: 13.3 percent of men are mem-

bers of a union, compared to 11.3 percent of women. Last year, nearly 44 percent of all union members were women. "The gap between their rates has narrowed considerably since 1983, when the rate for men was about 10 percentage points higher than the rate for women. Between 1983 and 2009, the union membership rate for men declined by 11.4 percentage points, while the rate for women declined by 3.3 percentage points," BLS said.

U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis said the data shows that, along with better wages, union members "have access to better health care, retirement and leave benefits. These numbers make it clear that union jobs are good jobs. These numbers show a need for Congress to pass legislation to level the playing field to enable more American workers to access the benefits of union membership."

(Editor's Note: Press Associates Inc., the AFL-CIONow blog, and the WSLC Reports contributed to the report.)

Employees at Kaiser Permanente in Los Angeles leave SEIU for new union

LOS ANGELES (PAI) — Three groups of health care workers at Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles Medical Center voted Jan. 26 to leave Service Employees International Union for the newly created and independent National Union of Healthcare Workers.

SEIU has represented the more than 2,000 registered nurses, psychiatric counselors, social workers and health care professionals for the past 30 years.

Final tallies in the National Labor Relations Board-monitored elections showed registered nurses voted 746-36 for NUHW, while health care professionals went for the independent union by a 189-29 margin. Psychiatric counselors and social workers favored NUHW 717-192.

Elsewhere in California, the National Union of Healthcare Workers has petitioned to hold elections at

dozens of health care facilities where workers are currently represented by SEIU.

SEIU has filed charges of unlawful conduct against NUHW and investigations of the charges by the NLRB blocked those elections. "Some charges have been withdrawn and those remaining are expected to be resolved soon, clearing the way for future balloting between the two unions," the NLRB said in its announcement of the Los Angeles returns.

Some 100-plus other Kaiser units — including more hospitals — could vote between now and June in representation contests involving 65,000 workers statewide.

The National Union of Healthcare Workers victory in Los Angeles is part of a long battle over California health care workers, and over SEIU's direction at the national level. The conflict

began several years ago when SEIU officials at the national level reached contract terms with various California hospitals, going over the head of its California affiliate, the 150,000-member United Health Care Workers-West. Affiliate President Sal Rosselli, then an SEIU vice president and Executive Board member, strongly protested what he called sweetheart contracts and how SEIU reached them without member input. Rosselli also challenged top-down practices at SEIU.

In response, SEIU put United Health Care Workers-West into trusteeship, uncovering what it said was evidence of misuse of union money. It ousted Rosselli and other officers. A hearing on the charges produced no proof. The conflict led Rosselli, other officers, staffers and activists to leave SEIU and form the independent National Union of Healthcare Workers.

Soccer deal a good one for Portland workers

A deal has been reached between the City of Portland and Portland Timbers' owner Merritt Paulson's Peregrine, LLC to turn PGE Park into a major league soccer stadium.

Included in the \$31 million pact is an agreement guaranteeing that the stadium will be built by workers who earn a family wage and get health and retirement benefits, and an agreement by the stadium operator to stay neutral during any union organizing campaign. The City has set a goal of 30 percent minority-owned contractors and 10 percent women-owned contractors on the redevelopment project.

The City has committed \$11.9 million in bonds to help pay for the changes.

In a press release, Portland Mayor Sam Adams said the deal will "bring immediate construction jobs to Portland and continuing revenue, visitors, and vital spending to Portland's central city in the long term."

Renovating the stadium will create approximately 200 construction jobs. Initial work has already begun. Construction will cease during the baseball season and start up again in early September. Turner Construction is the general contractor.

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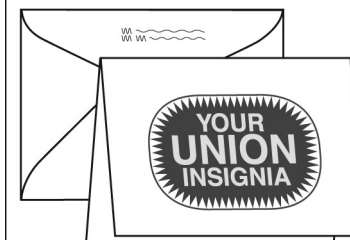
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Housing Authority to import windows for apartment weatherization project

Rejects windows made at former Republic Window & Doors in Chicago

By MICHAEL GUTWIG
Editor

With hundreds of billions of dollars being borrowed and spent to stimulate jobs in the U.S., it's surprising that the Housing Authority of Portland plans to replace windows at the Hollywood East Apartments with new ones imported from Canada.

Hollywood East is a 15-story, 286-unit, concrete apartment building located at 4400 NE Broadway in the Hollywood District. Built in 1969, residents there are low-income seniors and people with disabilities.

A Portland company, Medallion Industries, made a presentation to supply windows manufactured in the United States, but was rebuffed by the Housing Authority for what it said was a lack of a track record producing windows for buildings over five stories.

Instead, the windows will be supplied by Cascadia, which is located in Langley, British Columbia.

Medallion intended to use windows manufactured at the former Republic Windows & Doors in Chicago. If you recall, 275 unionized Republic Window employees held a six-day sit-in just before Christmas 2008 after the plant abruptly shut down. Workers demanded

that they be paid what was owed them. The sit-in drew national attention and was lauded by then-President-elect Barack Obama.

That national attention led to a California company, Serious Materials, stepping up to buy the plant. Serious — a highly successful company in the green, heating-efficient window market — agreed to the same contract Republic Windows had with members of United Electrical Workers Local 1110 at the time of its closure. Unfortunately, to date, only 35 employees have gone back to work, according to United Electrical Workers Western Regional President Carl Rosen.

Medallion Industries sells Serious Materials windows.

When the Northwest Labor Press was initially contacted about the imported windows, it was because the money for the Hollywood East weatherization project was to come from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act stimulus funds. ARRA is the \$787 billion economic stimulus package enacted by Congress to spur job creation in the U.S. in the wake of the Great Recession of 2008-09. Roughly \$8 billion is earmarked for weatherization and energy-efficiency projects nationwide. ARRA has "Buy American" language that requires manufactured products be produced in the United States.

"It was explained to us that this project was being funded with an ARRA grant," a spokeswoman for Medallion Industries told the Labor Press. "We had to submit an affidavit proving that

the windows were made in the U.S."

On Dec. 17, Medallion was notified by e-mail that the replacement windows at Hollywood East would be supplied by Cascadia. The Medallion spokeswoman said she was told Cascadia's product was selected because it had a track record with buildings similar to Hollywood East, and that they were able to "overcome" the Made in USA requirement by having the windows assembled locally.

Contacted by the Labor Press, Housing Authority of Portland public affairs director Shelly Marchesi confirmed the windows were to be imported, but said funding for that portion of the weatherization project was a "pass through" from Multnomah County. "You really should talk to Multnomah County," Marchesi said.

Mary Li, Community Services manager at Multnomah County's Department of Community and Family Services, said the county initially considered using ARRA funds, but later decided not to. She cited the imported windows as a reason why.

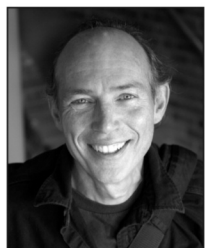
"We have 30 projects in the pipeline. We cobble from a variety of funding sources to make them happen," Li said, noting that the \$600,000 for windows at Hollywood East will come from various federal- and state-funded weatherization programs.

"You have to remember, we (Multnomah County) didn't call for these windows," Li said. "It's a HAP project. HAP and their architects determined

(Turn to Page 12)



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PDX screeners in nationwide campaign to unionize

A nationwide union campaign is under way among roughly 40,000 airport screeners at 450 U.S. airports. The screeners check baggage and passengers to keep weapons and explosives off planes.

Screening used to be the responsibility of airlines, which contracted it out as low-wage work. After the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, it was made a federal responsibility: Screeners, renamed "transportation security officers,"

were made employees of the newly-formed Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

Since the agency began, American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) has represented the TSA workforce. AFGE currently has about 12,000 dues-paying TSA members at more than 100 airports. The stand-alone National Treasury Employees Union, which is not affiliated with the AFL-CIO, also seeks to represent the group.

But big fights have been waged in Congress over whether the screeners would have the right to collective bargaining. TSA workers currently have the right to join unions and have union representatives represent them at many types of proceedings, but they have no process for establishing a union as their exclusive representative. The law that created the TSA said it would be up to the TSA administrator whether TSA employees have the right to collectively bargain a contract.

The TSA administrator appointed by President Bush said "no" to collective bargaining. Barack Obama told AFGE during his presidential campaign that he would support collective bargaining at TSA.

Sept. 17, eight months after taking office, Obama named Erroll Southers to head the TSA. Southers is chief of homeland security and intelligence for Los Angeles International Airport. But the appointment had to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate, and Senator Jim DeMint (R-South Carolina) and several other Republicans used Senate rules to hold up the nomination. DeMint argued that giving TSA work-

ers collective bargaining rights would hurt security by making management less flexible in changing workplace practices. AFGE leaders countered that unionization could improve national security, because it would improve screener morale and working conditions, reduce turnover, and make workers less fearful of losing their jobs for reporting security lapses or instances where local practices don't conform to national guidelines. Plus, AFGE points out, immigration agents, border patrol, and local police and firefighters have long had collective bargaining rights, without that deterring their mission.

To show support for the union by transportation security officers — and other unionists — AFGE has been holding rallies around the country, including the Portland International Airport Dec. 17.

After the failed attempt to bomb a Detroit-bound airliner on Christmas Day, Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.), senior member of the House Homeland Security Committee and the Aviation Subcommittee, weighed in with a Dec. 29 letter to DeMint: "You must decide what presents the greater threat to the traveling public — terrorists organizing attacks against U.S. aviation, or the potential of labor organizing amongst TSA employees."

Apparently, labor was the bigger threat for DeMint, who continued to block the nomination. On Jan. 20, Southers withdrew his name from consideration. In an interview, Southers cited "inaction" on the administration's part in defending him. "I wish someone would have defended me more aggressively,"

Southers told the online magazine Salon.com.

White House spokesman Nicholas Shapiro said Southers would have been an excellent TSA Administrator, "but [the president] understands his personal decision and the choice he has made."

Reacting to the withdrawal in a press statement, DeMint repeated his point about the union: "Collective bargaining would force TSA officials to ask union bosses for permission to make critical security changes," DeMint said. "Mr. Southers was never forthcoming about his intentions to give union bosses veto power over security decisions at our airports."

As of press time, there was no word on whether or when Obama would nominate another TSA administrator, but AFGE may end up pursuing an alternate strategy, a bill that put TSA employees under the protections

of the federal civil service system — including the right to collective bargaining. HR 1881 has 147 cosponsors in the House, including Democrats Earl Blumenauer and Peter DeFazio in Oregon and Norm Dicks, Jim McDermott, and Adam Smith in Washington.

If they ever win the right to fully unionize, goals are likely to be modest. AFGE Regional Coordinator Ed Terry said TSA workers hope to use collective bargaining to get on the federal government's regular pay scale — and dump TSA's unique pay-for-performance system, which Terry said gives management too much latitude and invites favoritism.

Federal employees unionize under a different law than the one that governs private sector unionization. Union membership and dues are voluntary, and they're prohibited from striking.

Hansen appointed to open Council seat in Vancouver

VANCOUVER — The Vancouver City Council appointed Bart Hansen to the vacant seat created by the election of Tim Leavitt as mayor.

Leavitt left his seat to run against incumbent Mayor Royce Pollard.

Hansen, who worked as office services manager at Clark Public Utilities, was sworn in Feb. 1.

Hansen was one of 15 individuals to apply for the open seat. The City Council whittled that list down to five people. One of them, Anne McEneaney-Ogle, was endorsed by the Clark, Skamania West Klickitat Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

McEneaney-Ogle ran unsuccessfully last November against Councilwoman Jeannie Harris.

Hansen must run for election in November 2010 to keep the seat. He will also have to run again in November 2011, the next regularly scheduled council election.

...Six parking meter techs to get \$28,300 in back pay

(From Page 5)

written up for insubordination if they refused to fix problems with machines installed by FeatherLite.

Worse was yet to come.

Lacking experience with SmartMeters, FeatherLite employees may also have been unaware of certain security features in the machines, features which alerted the City's techs when \$3,400 disappeared out of meters while they were in FeatherLite's possession. The techs notified management. A police investigation went nowhere, but FeatherLite reimbursed the City for the losses.

In February 2008, Precise ParkLink terminated its contract with FeatherLite, citing "financial irregularities, incapacity or unwillingness to provide project management ... and other reasons." Precise ParkLink then sent two employees to Portland for six months to complete the upgrade.

Other unsavory details began to tumble out. Bruce Feathers, owner of FeatherLite, lawyered up and threatened the City with legal action. According to details published in the Tribune, Feathers charged that City Parking Operations Division Manager Ellis McCoy had acted improperly to get Precise ParkLink to cancel its contract with FeatherLite — after Feathers declined to hire him.

As reported in the Tribune, McCoy had tweaked Precise ParkLink's bid documents before they were submitted. Precise ParkLink had been the only bidder. It was also McCoy's suggestion that Precise ParkLink subcontract with FeatherLite; and McCoy advised Feathers how much to pay the employees who would do the work. McCoy and Feathers had traveled to Toronto, where Precise ParkLink paid for meals, golfing, and fishing. McCoy also accepted meals and Blazers tickets from Feathers.

The Tribune also reported that when McCoy learned of the missing money from the meters, he alerted Feathers — before police were informed. Feathers cleared his employees of wrongdoing, after they volunteered for and passed polygraph tests paid for by the company. A deputy district attorney concluded that McCoy's actions eliminated the chance for police to catch the suspects unaware, according to a memo the Tribune obtained.

Soon after Precise ParkLink got the contract to do the upgrade, McCoy had begun negotiating a plan to sell all the City's meters to Toronto mortgage broker Fovere Capital Management, Precise ParkLink's financing partner, for \$9.4 million; the City would then lease the meters back over five years for about \$12 million, while also paying Pre-

cise ParkLink \$3 million (\$591,000 a year) to maintain them.

McCoy angled for FeatherLite to hire him, sending Feathers a résumé and a business plan that proposed they try to replicate the sale-and-lease-back idea in Seattle.

The sale-and-lease-back proposal was headed to City Council for approval, but the decision was delayed and then scuttled after then-city auditor Gary Blackmer expressed "significant concerns." Blackmer's office learned of the proposal from Tribune reporter Nick Budnick just as his office was preparing to issue an audit report on the SmartMeter program.

The revelations led the City to investigate McCoy. Two years later, McCoy remains; FeatherLite continues to do business with the City; and no managers appear to have faced any sanction for the City's violation of the union contract.

But the union workers got their "day in court" in 2009 when their grievance protesting contracting out got to the stage of arbitration. A city attorney argued that the work had been contracted out because it was too technical for city employees to handle. But in the hearings and during the arbitrator's visit to the city's parking meter workshop, the integrity and professionalism of the city's techs

was evident, says Barbara Diamond, attorney for the union.

"The city was overtly and continually disrespectful to the union," Diamond said. "They treated the process with such disdain; I think that's partly what the arbitrator picked up on."

The arbitrator ordered the City to cease and desist from further violations of the union contract, and pay the techs 780 hours of back pay at the overtime (time-and-a-half) rate. Since most of the group earns \$24.21 an hour, the total cost to the City comes to over \$200,000.

Dehner faults Adams, then commissioner, now mayor, for the fiasco. It was Adams' bureau when the outsourcing contract was approved, and it's his bureau now. Dehner said he and the techs pleaded with Adams for intervention, but Adams hid behind city attorneys.

"They had multiple opportunities to intervene and set this straight, and they failed," Dehner said.

The city attorney's office did not return Labor Press calls.

It's not clear when the checks will be issued. As of press time, over a month had passed since the arbitrator's Dec. 17, 2009, ruling, and Diamond was contemplating legal action to get the City to pay.

Laborers Gary Moore re-elected to portland Metal Trades Council post

Gary Moore Jr., a business representative of Laborers Local 296, was re-elected executive secretary treasurer of the Metal Trades Council of Portland and Vicinity.

Also elected to office were: President Scott Lucy, a business rep for Machinists District Lodge 24; Vice President Bob Scott of the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters; Recording Secretary Bill Elzie of Teamsters Local 162; and Sergeant of Arms John Candioto, a business representative of Sheet Metal Workers Local 16;

Elected trustees were Bob Carroll of IBEW Local 48, Jack Miller of Operating Engineers Local 701, and Lance Hickey of Boilermakers Local 104.

Executive Board members elected were Tim Carrier of Painters and Allied Trades District Council No. 5, Mike O'Rourke of Plumbers and Fitters Local 290, and Stan Danielson, business manager of Insulators Local 36.

Terms are for three years.

A labor 'look back' over Obama's first year in office

By **DON McINTOSH**
Associate Editor

One year into his four-year term, President Barack Obama's list of achievements looks a little thin when it comes to issues of primary importance to organized labor. The list consists of the stimulus act, several pro-labor appointments and executive orders, a tariff on Chinese tires, and a law that gives women workers more time to sue over wage discrimination.

"[When Obama was inaugurated], obviously everybody had very high hopes for change and it was almost building up to unrealistic proportions," said national AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler. "But we feel really good about some of the changes that have been made in the agencies and on the regulatory levels."

Sworn in Jan. 21, 2009, Obama reversed a number of anti-union positions from the previous Administration. In his first few weeks of taking office, Obama issued executive orders:

- Ending a ban on all-union project labor agreements on federal construction projects.
- Preventing contractors from being reimbursed for spending money to influence workers deciding whether to form a union and engage in collective bargaining.

• Ending a Bush Administration rule requiring federal contractors to post notice that workers can limit financial support for the unions that represent them.

• Requiring federal service contractors to offer jobs to current workers when contracts change.

Obama also signed a bill Bush had said he would veto — the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act — which overturned a 2007 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that denied a woman's right to sue in cases of pay discrimination if she waited



BARACK OBAMA

more than 180 days after the first paycheck.

Obama appointed Hilda Solis, daughter of a Teamsters shop steward, to head the Department of Labor. Solis was a four-term Congresswoman and before that chairwoman of the California State Senate Labor Committee. Since her confirmation in February, the Department of Labor has added 250 investigators to the department's Wage and Hour Division.

Obama had less success with appointments to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which adjudicates unfair labor practice cases. Since 2007, three of the five seats on Board have been vacant. Obama promoted eight-year NLRB member Wilma Liebman to chair the Board, and on July 9, made nominations to fill the vacancies: Mark Pearce, a union-side labor lawyer; Craig Becker, a lawyer for the Service Employees International Union and the

AFL-CIO; and Brian Hayes, management-side labor lawyer and Senate Republican labor policy director. By law the NLRB can have no more than three members of the president's political party. But Becker's nomination was nixed after Sen. John McCain put a hold on it, and thus far none of the three have been confirmed.

Organized labor was less pleased with some of Obama's other appointments, including U.S. trade negotiator: Obama appointed NAFTA supporter and former Dallas mayor Ron Kirk.

The AFL-CIO did cheer in September, however, when Obama imposed import tariffs on Chinese tires. Responding to a complaint the United Steel Workers (USW) filed in 2008, the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) found that a surge of Chinese tires into the United States was harming the domestic tire industry. USW wanted import quotas, but the ITC recommended tariffs for three years, at 55, 45, and 35 percent. Obama opted for milder tariffs of 35 percent the first year, 30 percent the second year, and 25 percent the third.

By price tag, the biggest piece of legislation signed by Obama is the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, better known as the stimulus act. Tax cuts were two-fifths of the package, and another quarter took the form of additional benefits for the poor and unemployed. But aid to the states saved some jobs of teachers and public employees, and some building trades workers got extra work here and there on stimulus funded public works projects. Still, un-

employment was 8.9 percent when Obama signed the in February 2009; at the end of 2009 it was 10 percent.

Union leaders also had hoped their top priority, the Employee Free Choice Act, would pass last year. The bill would crack down on employer lawlessness during union campaigns and make it easier for workers to unionize and get a first contract. Obama has said he would sign the bill, but has not pushed for its passage. It has been held up in the Senate, where Republicans are certain to filibuster. It takes 60 votes to overcome a filibuster.

For months, union leaders were waiting for Minnesota Senator Al Franken to become the 60th vote; he was sworn in July 7. But then Massachusetts Sen. Ted Kennedy, diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor in May 2008, died Aug. 25. Organized labor waited for Kennedy's replacement, only to find Massachusetts voters elected a Republican, Scott Brown, in the Jan. 19, 2010, special election.

Much of the president's agenda in Year Two could come down to whether Democrats are able to unite and overcome the Senate filibuster.

...Imported windows

(From Page 10)

this."

Housing Authority of Portland architect Leslie Crehan said Cascadia was selected because it uses a different technology in its glazing process and that the "heat mirror technology" is new for Serious Materials.

"We asked (Medallion) for other projects of more than five stories to use as examples," Crehan aid. "They couldn't provide any examples. That made us nervous."

The Medallion spokeswoman said the replacement windows it offered were 525 series windows (formerly sold under the brand name Alpen). Alpen, of Boulder, Colorado, also was acquired by Serious last year. Production for that particular brand of window recently moved from Boulder to Chicago.

Brad Begin, vice president of sales for Serious Materials, in an e-mail to the Labor Press wrote: "Alpen is the oldest and longest continuous fabricator of insulated glass units using heat mirror and has been producing heat mirror products for almost three decades, and has more large project experience than any company in the world."

Begin said Serious Materials is about to close a multi-million-dollar deal to provide suspended coated film glass units for the 6,500 windows in the Empire State Building.

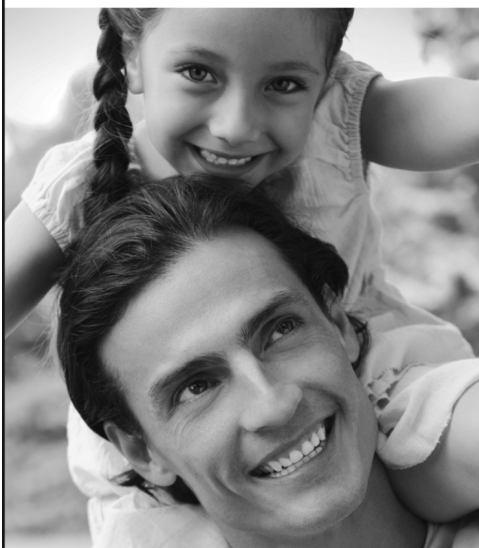
Crehan said drawings and specs for the Hollywood East apartment weatherization project aren't completed yet, but at this point, "we will choose the window that we feel best about, a window with a track record."

'...we feel really good about some of the changes that have been made in the agencies and on the regulatory levels.'

LIZ SHULER

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