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Striking employees reject Weyerhaeuser offer

Local strike reflects trend, professors say

By Chris Norred
Of the Emerald

Striking Weyerhaeuser Co. employees strongly rejected the company's final contract offer Monday. Many predict the move could mean a long, hot summer for about 7,500 workers at the company's 12 plant sites in Washington and Oregon, including about 1,200 striking employees in Springfield and Cottage Grove.

And in light of the strike, University professors agree that current trends in politics, economics and society have traditional labor unions facing an uphill battle to maintain their hard-won status.

The International Woodworkers of America and the Lumber, Production and Industrial Workers unions' western council members voted 3,772 to 939 to reject the company's revised final contract proposal, which would have cut wages and benefits by more than \$4 an hour.



Oly Olson (left), Steve Sapp (center) and Daniel Todd are part of the International Woodworkers of America union striking Weyerhaeuser Co.

Ben Youngren of the IWA local in Springfield said union members are hoping the company will reopen negotiations soon. But he said the possibility

of a long strike is "strong." Weyerhaeuser officials said they were disappointed with the vote and restated the company's position that labor costs

must be lowered for it to continue operating at its current level. They did not say what their next move would be.

The workers began striking

June 16, when Weyerhaeuser would not bargain over the contract that expired June 1. The company revised its final offer June 27 when it issued the proposal that was rejected Monday.

The proposal called for a 25 percent rollback in wages and fringe benefits, with a profit-sharing plan estimated to replace about \$1 of the \$4 cut.

Economists have predicted that a lengthy strike will have a devastating effect on the local economies.

The dilemma of the striking Weyerhaeuser workers is representative of some of the current hardships facing labor unions nationwide, according to University professors. Hardships have been developing since the 1950s, they say, and the face of labor relations has changed dramatically in this decade.

"The firing and replacement of striking air controllers by the

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Foreign students learn English, make friends at campus institute

By Marty Schwarzbauer
Of the Emerald

Emiko Kono came to Eugene from Tokyo, Japan to learn English.

After spending a month in an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) program last year at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Kono transferred to the University's American English Institute (AEI). The Institute's primary purpose, according to AEI Director Russ Tomlin, is to provide an English-learning program at the University for foreign students such as Kono.

Kono said she chose AEI because of the program's reputation in Japan and because of recommendations from friends who had gone through the program.

AEI employs a core staff of eight permanent full-time instructors, three short-term instructors and two to six graduate teaching fellows per term.

In contrast, the department at Pacific University had only one instructor, which Kono said, "is not so good for me." She said she likes the AEI program much better and hopes to learn English well enough by the end of summer term to enroll at the University of Hawaii in fall, where she plans to go into hotel management.

Maria-Gracia Cabanilla, a native of Cuayaquil, Ecuador, had no expectations when she first came to AEI in June 1984.

"It was a vacation, to take classes for eight weeks, and to study English," Cabanilla said.

She completed four terms at AEI and graduated from the program last month. She started classes a week later as a full-time student, and is currently a sophomore at the University.

While a student at AEI, Cabanilla attended two one-hour sessions a week with a private tutor. The sessions generally included conversational English.

"I already had teachers to explain things. I wanted to get more comfortable with just daily conversation," she said.

Kono also meets a tutor twice weekly. In addition to reading from magazines and children's books, she works with her tutor on 'r' and 'l' sounds. "These are very difficult for (the) Japanese," she said.

About 75 percent of the students at AEI request tutors, who are provided at no extra cost, said Iris Moye, coordinator for the AEI tutor program. AEI employs about 20-30 tutors per term, who are mostly work-study students, she said.

Moye said she always is looking for prospective tutors who are interested in cross-cultural matters, who have experience or interest in traveling or living abroad, and who have some sort of alternative language background. This will give the tutor a sensitivity to the problems and challenges facing someone from another country trying to learn English in the United States, she said.

Besides the tutorial program, AEI also operates the International Friendship program.

"We try to recruit American students to be partners with our students on an informal basis," said Jackie Uhler, academic adviser at AEI. "Most of our students would like to meet American students but find it difficult. We try to facilitate that and match them on the basis of common interests."

Cultural and leisure activities are part of AEI programs each term. Students may sign up for trips to Portland, Crater Lake or the coast, and for horseback rides and other activities.

While attending AEI, students live in dormitories, quads, apartments or with an American host family. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the Host Family program whenever possible, Uhler said.

"It's not just a boarding situation," she said. "Students get actively involved in the family's life."

AEI has an average enrollment of about 100 students per term, with about 30 percent coming from Japan, 25 percent from Saudi Arabia, and another 25 percent from Kuwait, Yemen, Lebanon and other Middle Eastern countries, Tomlin said. The rest come from Indonesia, China, Korea and Latin America.

"We rarely get European or African students," he said.

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A racing camel?

Greg Cosgrove (kneeling), Kevin Simmons (left) and Karen O'Malley, ran the entire 10-kilometer Butte to Butte race Friday as a sheik and camel. About 2,800 serious and not-so-serious runners turned out for the 13th annual event.

Photo by Shu-Shing Chen