

Biden signs \$15 minimum wage for federal contract workers

By **JOSH BOAK**
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden signed an executive order Tuesday, April 27, to increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for federal contractors, providing a pay bump to hundreds of thousands of workers.

Biden administration officials said the higher wages would lead to greater worker productivity, offsetting any additional costs to taxpayers.

“This executive order will promote economy and efficiency in federal contracting, providing value for taxpayers by enhancing worker productivity and generating higher-quality work by boosting workers’ health, morale, and effort,” the White House said in a statement.

The liberal Economic Policy Institute estimates



Evan Vucel/Associated Press, File

In this Feb. 24, 2021, file photo, President Joe Biden pauses after signing an executive order relating to U.S. supply chains, in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington. Biden is preparing to sign an executive order to increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for federal contractors. Administration officials say it will provide a pay bump to hundreds of thousands.

as many as 390,000 low-wage federal contractors

would receive a raise, with roughly half of the benefi-

ciaries being Black or Hispanic workers. There are

an estimated 5 million contract workers in the federal government, according to a posting last year for the Brookings Institution by Paul Light, a public policy professor at New York University.

The increase could be dramatic for workers who earn the current minimum of \$10.95 an hour. Those workers would receive a 37% pay hike, though the increase would be rolled out gradually, according to the terms of the order.

The White House said the workers would include cleaning and maintenance workers, nursing assistants who care for veterans, cafeteria workers providing for the military and laborers who build and repair federal infrastructure.

All federal agencies would need to include the higher wage in new contract offerings by Jan. 30 of next

year. By March 30, agencies would need to implement the higher wage into new contracts. The increase would also be in existing contracts that are extended.

The wage would be indexed to inflation, so it would automatically increase with each year to reflect changes in prices. The tipped minimum wage of \$7.65 an hour for federal contractors would be replaced by the standard minimum by 2024.

Biden has pushed to establish a \$15 hourly minimum wage nationwide for all workers, making it a part of his coronavirus relief package. But the Senate parliamentarian said the wage hike did not follow the budgetary rules that allowed the \$1.9 trillion plan to pass with a simple majority, so it was not included in the bill that became law in March.

Keeping the history

State honors Salem woman for preserving work of trailblazing landscape architects

By **SAPHARA HARRELL**
Salem Reporter via AP StoryShare

SALEM — For Bobbie Dolp, the gardens at Gaiety Hollow are a laid out in a complex, extraordinary way that’s hard to convey.

She said they’re built around the concept of rooms, much like a house.

“It feels much bigger than it really is. People are always amazed,” Dolp said.

The gardens were designed by Elizabeth Lord and Edith Schryver, the pair behind the first women-owned landscape architecture firm in the Pacific Northwest. The women’s influence can be seen in various gardens around Salem.

For nearly two decades, Dolp has made it her mission to preserve their legacy. Now, her work is being recognized with a state historic preservation award.

After Dolp retired from teaching chemistry and physics at Central High School in Independence, she had quite an extensive garden.

Over time, Dolp said she shifted from vegetable gardening to planting more flowers.

“I’ve always loved being outdoors and being active and working with my hands,” she said.

She was drawn to the uniqueness of Lord and Schryver’s story, two women from different backgrounds and education levels who met in 1927 while abroad in Europe studying gardens.

They had both gone to a school in Massachusetts for women in landscape architecture, but attended years apart. They moved west to establish their business in 1929, in Lord’s family home in Salem.

“They certainly blazed a trail and left a significant legacy,” Dolp said.

She said their skills blended well, with Schryver doing the engineering, design and layout while Lord excelled at plant combinations.

“It’s interesting to see how they developed their business sense as well as incredible aesthetic sense” Dolp said.

She and another gardening friend began to envision a group that would explore the story of Lord and Schryver, who designed more than 200 landscapes and gardens in the region from 1929 to 1969.

They brought garden

preservation specialist Bill Noble to see Gaiety Hollow, Lord and Schryver’s personal home, garden and studio located at 545 Mission St. At the time, the garden was privately owned.

Dolp said Noble told them there was no garden like it on the West Coast.

“Well, we better get organized,” Dolp recalled thinking.

She helped establish the Lord & Schryver Conservancy in 2005, with an eye on one day purchasing the garden where the women did their work and opening it to the public.

Dolp said she had no idea when that opportunity would come about.

Pam Wasson, executive director of the Lord & Schryver Conservancy, said Dolp is “a real go-getter” who worked hard to get Gaiety Hollow listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

“She really had the passion and drive to go through all these steps and processes,” Wasson said.

She said accomplishing what Dolp has for the historic property took a lot of work.

In the intervening years, the nonprofit raised money to hire a firm to document what the garden was like in its “period of significance.” It also rehabilitated and maintains the historic gardens at the Deepwood Estate, also designed by Lord and Schryver.

Dolp said Lord and Schryver did all the work themselves in a studio above the garage. There’s no record of an intern or secretary helping them.

In 2015, the conservancy purchased Gaiety Hollow after 18 months of fundraising.

Through the decade-long process, Dolp said, “It’s just one foot in front of the other.”

On April 29, Dolp will be recognized for her work establishing the Lord and Schryver Conservancy during the Oregon Heritage Excellence Awards.

Awards are for those who “have made outstanding contributions to preserving Oregon heritage.”

Dolp said she’s spent “a lot” of hours in the garden, and many more getting the conservancy off its feet through grant writing and communicating its importance to people.

“I haven’t regretted any minute,” Dolp said.

TRADE

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one year when wheat from Canada and Australia had an advantage through the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, U.S. Wheat Associates Japan country director Kazunori Nakano said. The U.S. pulled out of the original TPP agreement, opting instead to negotiate a separate agreement with Japan.

“Flour millers remained conservative and did not change their blending ratio of raw material despite some increased cost disadvantage of U.S. wheat during 2019,” Nakano said.

Japan’s Ministry of Finance year-over-year import statistics do show an advantage for U.S. beef.

Whereas overall imports of chilled beef were down 5% from over 274,893 tons in 2019 to just over 261,510 tons last year, U.S. product imports decreased only 1.4%, from almost 126,908 tons to 125,157 tons.

Conversely, while overall frozen beef imports decreased 0.5% from almost 340,516 to just under 338,898 tons, imports of U.S. meat jumped 14%, from almost 114,162 tons to almost 129,904 tons.

However, Yamashoji cautioned against making an assessment based on statistics only.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is a dramatic event



Port of Portland/Contributed Photo

Wheat bound for overseas pours into the hold of a ship at the Port of Portland. U.S. wheat exports to Japan increased 4.4% last year.

and the impact is ongoing, so simply looking at year-over-year volumes is not a thorough way to evaluate the U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement,” he said.

U.S. beef is heavily utilized by Japan’s foodservice sector, which was hit hard by COVID-related restrictions and still is not operating under normal conditions, Yamashoji said.

The growth in imports of frozen U.S. beef was partly due to consumer demand for staples such as beef short plate, of which the U.S. is the dominant supplier in Japan, he said.

“U.S. beef short plate is heavily utilized by the gyudon beef bowl restaurants and also sold thin-sliced at retail, for convenient and affordable home cooking,” Yamashoji said.

Unless the overall demand for imported beef increases, imports of U.S. beef will not increase sig-

nificantly, said Shiroh Ohashi, executive director of the Japan Meat Traders Association, a grouping of 30 meat-importing and

-exporting companies.

“I just hope the COVID-19 problem will be resolved soon,” Ohashi said.

For their part, whereas overall wheat imports increased only 0.8% year-over-year in 2020 from over 5,331 tons to almost 5,374 tons, U.S. product rose 4.4% from over 2,521 tons to almost 2,632 tons.

Since the U.S.-Japan trade agreement went into effect, the markup on wheat from the U.S., Australia and Canada has been the same, 21-member Japan Flour Millers Association Yasuo Sasaki said.

“I don’t think there will be any action to unconditionally increase or decrease the import quantity of wheat from any of those countries,” Sasaki said.

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