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Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain (center) and Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner (right) applaud Brad Witt as he holds up a plaque in recognition of his 14 years of service as secretary-treasurer of the state labor federation. Witt was declared ineligible to continue in the elected post because his union, UFCW Local 555, doesn't plan to sign a Solidarity Charter. A successor won't be named until the federation's next Executive Board meeting in March.

Witt ineligible to serve

Brad Witt, secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO for the past 14 years, was declared ineligible to retain the position because his union, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, doesn't plan to sign a Solidarity Charter with the state labor federation.

The seat was declared vacant by the Oregon AFL-CIO Executive Board at its quarterly meeting Dec. 16. A successor to fill the unexpired term will be named when the board meets again in March. In the meantime, AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain will serve double-duty as secretary-treasurer.

UFCW was one of four unions to leave the national AFL-CIO last July to form the new Change to Win federation. But because the disaffiliations had such a huge financial impact on state and local labor groups, national leaders worked out a plan — called Solidarity Charters — allowing the Change to Win unions to maintain their affiliations with state AFL-CIO bodies and central labor councils, with full voting rights and eligibility to run for office.

Both Witt and former Oregon AFL-CIO President Tim Nesbitt (of the Service Employees International Union) were members of Change to Win unions. No one knew if Solidarity Charters would ever come to fruition, so in the interim, Nesbitt took up membership with the

National Writers Union of the United Auto Workers and Witt joined a Machinists-Woodworkers local union.

Negotiations dragged on for months. With the outcome still uncertain, Nesbitt resigned as president of the Oregon AFL-CIO at the federation's convention in October. He was succeeded by Chamberlain, a member of Fire Fighters Local 43. Also at that convention, delegates unanimously voted a constitutional change making the secretary-treasurer a part-time, unpaid position.

Witt had agreed to the resolution. Prior to the vote, he announced that he was returning to UFCW Local 555 as a full-time union representative. He planned to work for Local 555, fulfill his duties as the part-time secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO, and run for re-election as a state representative in the Oregon Legislature. Witt had taken a leave of absence from his AFL-CIO job last year to serve as a District 31 representative.

In November, the national AFL-CIO and Change to Win finalized the Solidarity Charter, which led to the reaffiliation at the state level of Service Employees Locals 503 and 49, UNITE HERE Local 9 and UFCW Local 1439, a small unit based in Spokane, Wash., but with members in Umatilla County, Oregon.

Reaffiliation discussions between Chamberlain and

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It's official! South Waterfront apprenticeship deal gets signatures

Signatures are finally on the dotted line on a "project apprenticeship agreement" for the multi-billion-dollar South Waterfront Central District development project.

"This agreement is significant for all of the partners of the South Waterfront Central District and will serve as a model for future private/public partnerships," said Portland Development Commission Executive Director Bruce Warner before signing the agreement at a special ceremony Dec. 14 that included project developers, union officials and commissioners and staff of PDC.

Partners in the agreement are Oregon Health & Science University, River Campus Investors, North Macadam Inc., PDC, most of the affiliates of the Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council, and the Carpenters Union.

"The partners have agreed to be accountable for developing a program to recruit, train and employ minorities and women in the construction trades, which is significant not only to the South Waterfront, but to the city as a whole," Warner said.

"Homer (partner Homer Williams)

and I are pleased to be working with the unions," said Dike Dames of Williams & Dames Development Co. "I'm a doer. We're going to try to make something happen here."

A Workforce Diversity Strategy was initially established by PDC and the City of Portland and agreed to by the trade unions in June 2004. But some language in that strategy was not supported by developers or OHSU, so the parties returned to the bargaining table. Last October, a final draft came before PDC commissioners that was agreeable to all parties. The commission unanimously adopted a resolution authorizing execution of the project apprenticeship agreement.

The goal is to have 35 percent women and minorities — 20 percent ethnic minority and 15 percent women — employed on a project-by-project basis in South Waterfront by the year 2014. Initially, the ratio is set at 4 percent women and 12 percent minorities, with incremental increases each year.

The project apprenticeship agreement will apply to all construction work performed by general contractors under contracts in excess of \$200,000 and by

subcontractors under contracts in excess of \$100,000. Contractors will be required to have apprenticeship training

programs in order to bid on the work.

"This agreement shows a true partnership between the PDC, owners and

unions in working towards a common goal of diversifying the workforce and ensuring that graduates will have marketable skills that will benefit their families and communities," said Nelda Wilson, assistant business manager of Operating Engineers Local 701.

PDC is coordinating the \$1.9 billion South Waterfront project, a 31-acre parcel of vacant industrial land on the Willamette River waterfront south of downtown that is being developed with public and private money into a neighborhood with a mix of jobs, housing, retail and recreation.

An oversight committee consisting of union officials, developers, OHSU and PDC will meet regularly to review progress of the project apprenticeship agreement.

Tentatively, union officials on the oversight committee are Local 701's Wilson; John Mohlis, executive secretary-treasurer of the Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council; Randy Knopp of the District Council of Laborers; Scott Axness of Electrical Workers Local 48, and Jerry Auvil or Pete Savage representing the Regional Council of Carpenters.



PDC Executive Director Bruce Warner signs pact negotiated with Portland area building trades unions to use more women and minority apprentices on the multi-billion-dollar South Waterfront development. Also signing the deal were Mark Williams (center) of Oregon Health & Science University; and developer Dike Dames (right), a partner with developer Homer Williams.