

...Oregon AFL-CIO makes changes on E-Board, staff

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UFCW Local 555 were not successful, Chamberlain reported to the Executive Board on Dec. 16. Part of those negotiations included a UFCW proposal to have Witt return as the full-time paid secretary-treasurer.

"We will continue to reach out and have discussions with UFCW," Chamberlain said.

However, under AFL-CIO rules, Witt was deemed ineligible to continue as the labor federation's secretary-treasurer because Local 555 wasn't an affiliated union.

"Brad has been very valuable to the union movement in Oregon, and I predict he will continue to do so at the Legislature and with Local 555," Chamberlain told the Northwest Labor Press.

Witt has lived in Clatskanie since

1989. He has served on numerous state boards, including the Board of Forestry and the Management-Labor Advisory Committee for the Oregon workers' compensation system.

In addition to his duties as chief financial officer and officer manager of the Oregon AFL-CIO, Witt handled workers' compensation, health and safety, workforce and economic development, and natural resource issues for the labor federation.

He was a gubernatorial appointee to the Oregon Workforce Investment Board and also served on the executive board of the Oregon Forest Resource Institute, as that organization's employee representative; on the State Boards of Forestry and Watershed Enhancement; and as chair of the bi-state Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership.

Witt worked in sawmills before joining the staffs of the national AFL-CIO, and later the Western Council of Industrial Workers, a division of the Carpenters Union (now a Change to Win affiliate), and UFCW Local 555, where his duties included public relations, labor economist and union representative.

Witt was elected secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO in September 1991.

Also at the Dec. 16 Executive Board meeting, Leslie Frane, executive director of SEIU Local 503, the state's largest public-sector union, was reappointed to her seat as first vice president, and Alice Dale, president of SEIU Local 49 and an international union vice president, was reappointed to her at-large position on the board. The seats had been declared vacant following the national disaffilia-

tion, but replacements were never sought because of the Solidarity Charter discussions.

Two positions previously held by representatives of UFCW Local 555 — a vice president and at-large seat — were filled.

Al Zullo, president and business representative of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757, was appointed vice president. Zullo held an at-large seat on the board, so that post was declared open.

Appointed to the two open at-large Executive Board seats were L.C. Hansen, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 82, and Leal Sundet, president of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 8.

The Oregon AFL-CIO also an-

nounced several staff changes.

Steve Lanning, the longtime political director, has accepted a newly created post as field coordinator, where he will work on strategic planning and coordination with affiliates and central labor councils.

Andy Lehn was hired as political organizer; Duke Shepard was hired as the political/campaign director, and Jennifer Sargent was hired as the public relations/research director. All are full-time positions

Lehn previously worked as the director of the Oregon chapter of Working America, a community affiliate of the AFL-CIO. Shepard was the economic development and small business policy manager of the Portland Business Alliance. Before joining the Business Alliance, Shepard served as campaign manager to re-elect U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio. Sargent was the political organizer for the Oregon AFL-CIO during the 2001 legislative session, where she coordinated publications, action alerts and media relations.

Sargent started working last month. Both Lehn and Shepard will start their new jobs in mid-January.

Additionally, the Oregon AFL-CIO will contract with Tim Nesbitt to analyze and evaluate several health care and revenue initiatives for the 2006 general election.

"We're back to full staff, with a lot of good experience," Chamberlain said. "I'm very excited about the coming year. I don't expect to miss a beat."

Early political endorsements announced by AFL-CIO

The Oregon AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education issued several early endorsements for the 2006 campaign cycle.

Among them was unanimous support for the re-election of Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner and Superintendent of Public Instruction Susan Castillo. Both are Democrats elected to non-partisan statewide posts.

Gardner is a member and former officer of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48. Along with the endorsement of Gardner came a \$1,000 campaign contribution.

Gardner was a guest speaker during a holiday luncheon of the Oregon AFL-CIO held Dec. 16 at the NECA-IBEW Training Center in Northeast Portland. Also making brief remarks were Governor Ted Kulongoski and Portland City Commissioner Randy Leonard.

Other politicians receiving early endorsements were more than a dozen incumbent state lawmakers who scored 100 percent voting records in the 2005 legislative session. The voting scorecard was compiled by the Oregon AFL-CIO and was based on legislation that im-

pacts working Oregonians.

On the list were Senators Bill Morrisette of Eugene, Charlie Ringo and Frank Shields of Portland, and State Reps. Phil Barnhart of Eugene, Terry Beyer of Springfield, Peter Buckley of Ashland, Jackie Dingfelder of Portland; Paul Holvey of Eugene, Mary Nolan, Diane Rosenbaum and Chip Shields of Portland, Carolyn Tomei of Milwaukie, and Brad Witt of Clatskanie.

Arnie Roblan of Coos Bay also re-

ceived an early endorsement. He scored a 94 percent on the COPE voting record but is in a targeted race for labor.

The only other early endorsement went to Mary Botkin, a lobbyist for Oregon Council 75 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, who is running for an open seat in Portland's District 46.

The COPE Board also heard about eight initiative petitions that are currently being circulated in Oregon for

signatures. At least five of the petitions are being pushed by right-wing, anti-labor groups.

The AFL-CIO is asking workers not to sign two initiatives — I-6 or I-42, and I-14. The first two are so-called "Taxpayer Bill of Rights" (TABOR) initiatives that would amend the State Constitution and impose arbitrary spending caps on all public services. I-14 is a complicated tax measure involving federal and state tax deductions.

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