

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Freightliner lays off 130 just before Christmas break

Four days before Christmas, Portland truck maker Freightliner told 130 workers they would be out of a job — effective at the end of their shift on Dec. 22.

“We had heard some rumors (about a layoff), but we didn’t expect it until sometime in January,” said Joe Kear, a business representative of Machinists Lodge 1005, which will lose 109 jobs.

Also affected were seven members of Sign Painters and Paint Makers Local 1094, six Teamsters, four janitors, members of Service Employees Local 49, and four non-union office workers.

“We didn’t have any time to plan for this,” said Kear. “The workers were called in on Wednesday and told that their last day was Thursday.”

The Swan Island plant was shut down for the holidays, so the laid-off workers did receive paychecks through Jan. 2.

Labor’s Community Service Agency, AFL-CIO, met with workers on Dec. 22 to provide them information about retraining and other services available to them.

Freightliner said reduced demand for its Western Star Trucks forced it to cut production in half — to 22 trucks a day. The Portland plant at Swan Island is the only location where the company produces that brand. Workers will continue cranking out 74 trucks a day, increasing output of Freightliner-brand trucks that include the Class 8, heavy duty Coronado, and military vehicles.

Freightliner-brand trucks require less manpower to build, Kear said.

Kear said Freightliner predicts the demand for Western Star Trucks will pick up late in 2006 and that workers could be recalled then.

Freightliner LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of DaimlerChrysler, employs 1,700 workers at the truck plant and another 1,800 at its corporate headquarters in Portland.

Iron Workers #516 faces shut down at Universal Structural

VANCOUVER, Wash. — Universal Structural, Inc., a Vancouver steel bridge fabricator, laid off 50 workers in December, and has plans to lay off the remaining 110 and shutter its doors in May.

That’s the understanding of the union, anyway. Iron Workers Shopmen’s Local 516 Business Manager

Mike Lappier spent 17 years working at USI and learned of the layoffs in a meeting with management last month.

USI is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Portland-based Harder Mechanical, which is also a signatory contractor with six construction trades unions.

USI general manager Dick Kerkering didn’t return calls by the NW Labor Press, but Steve Harder of Harder Mechanical did. Harder wouldn’t confirm or deny the report of layoff and closure plans, saying only that the company is still considering its options.

Universal Structural constructs and pre-assembles the girders that go into bridges. The company’s work can be seen in a number of well-known bridges, including the Hoffstadt Bridge over the Toutle River on the scenic Spirit Lake Memorial Highway to Mt. St. Helens.

The company may have run into difficulties in its bid on a renovation of the San Francisco Bay Bridge. The project is enormous and complicated, and has faced political delays and cost-overruns. USI was part of a consortium of companies that bid on work.

“These guys have been busting their ass on this job, working seven days a week,” Lappier said, “and then it’s gone.”

Terry Lansing elected to lead Bakers Local 114

Terry Lansing has been elected financial secretary-treasurer of Portland-based Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 114. He was appointed to the post in November 2004 following the



Bakers recognize longtime activist

Earl Cox (holding plaque) was recognized for 38 years of membership and participation in Bakers Union Local 114 of Portland during a recent meeting of the union’s executive board. Cox, who retired Oct. 1 from the Safeway Clackamas bread plant, served the union as a shop steward, executive board member and, most recently, as vice president of the local. Shown from left to right are Local 114 President Georgene Barragan, Secretary-Treasurer Terry Lansing, Cox and Business Agent Gene Beaudoin.

retirement of Laurel Koch. His elected term is for three years.

Georgene Barragan was re-elected president and Gene Beaudoin was re-elected as business agent of the 1,000-member union that represents primarily wholesale and retail bakery workers in Oregon.

Also elected to Local 114 posts were: Vice President Mike Connelly, Recording Secretary Shad Clark, Executive Board members Charlotte Freeland, Joel Kundert, Marilyn Michael, Nancy Milner, Claudine

Pruitt and Jeff Wesson; Trustees Sharon Rainey, Sharon Graham and Brenda Kenderdine; and delegate Terry McCleery and alternate Shad Clark.

Mail ballots were counted Dec. 13. All terms are for three years.

Lansing has been a member of Local 114 since 1976, where he worked as a packer at Williams Bakery. He was a shop steward at the plant and served on the union’s Executive Board, as recording secretary, and as a trustee.

Retired Secretary-Treasurer Noel Johnson hired Lansing as an assistant business agent in 1990. Lansing was elected business agent representing retail bakery workers from 1992 to 2004. The local’s Executive Board tapped him to fill the unexpired term of Financial Secretary-Treasurer Laurel Koch, who retired Nov. 10, 2004.

Beaudoin, a Portland native, is starting his fifth term as an elected business agent. He joined the Bakers Union in 1976 at Franz Bakery, where he was a shop steward. He held various positions on the union’s executive board, culminating with his election as president in 1990.

Beaudoin was appointed business representative in 1992. He has been re-elected to the post ever since.

LERC schedules arbitration class Jan. 8-12 in Portland

The Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) of the University of Oregon will present a labor education program Jan. 8-12 in Portland to help union officers and reps prepare for arbitrations.

“Arbitration: Preparation and Presentation” is an intensive four-day seminar that will assist participants in all aspects of the grievance arbitration process, including principles of contract interpretation and discipline and discharge. Participants will prepare and present a simulated grievance case to a practicing arbitrator. The session will be videotaped and critiqued.

For more information, call Barbara Byrd at 503-725-3296 or Marcus Widenor at 541-346-2785.

10th annual Labor Law Conference scheduled Jan. 20

The 10th annual Oregon Labor Law Conference will be held Friday, Jan. 20, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Electrical Workers Local 48, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

The conference is sponsored by the Oregon AFL-CIO, Local 48 and the Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council and is designed for business managers, business agents, organizers and union officers to get the latest information to avoid legal liability and to better serve members, said organizer Norman Malbin, general counsel for Local 48.

Speakers will include Oregon Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner and Richard Ahearn, regional director of the National Labor Relations Board in Seattle.

Registration is \$60 and includes lunch and materials. For more information, call Donna Marshall at 503-889-3660.



Holiday spirit at Machinists Hall

As they have done every year for at least the past four decades, members, staffers and retirees of Machinists District Lodge 24 in Southeast Portland spent the morning of Dec. 20 packing food boxes for distribution later in the week to out-of-work members. The food boxes included all the necessities for a grand holiday meal, including a turkey, potatoes, vegetables and rolls. The food boxes also contained two whole chickens, 10 pounds of hamburger, canned goods and boxed food items. “We estimate that each food box was worth \$100,” said Dan Sass, secretary-treasurer of District Lodge 24. This year the union prepared and distributed 35 food boxes.