

Union drive at Lottery in limbo

SALEM — A group workers at the Oregon Lottery Commission has been campaigning to unionize with Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 503 — the biggest of the unions representing employees of the State of Oregon. The Lottery is one of the few large state agencies that is still nonunion, and some workers are unhappy with what they see as arbitrary work rules and pay policies. Unlike other state employees, workers at the Lottery have no fixed pay steps or cost-of-living increases.

In mid-November, SEIU turned in a stack of signed union authorization cards

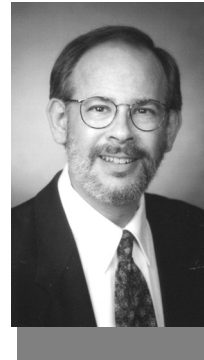
to show the union has majority support, and the Oregon Employment Relations Board, which handles union elections among state employees, certified that 156 of 303 eligible workers had signed the cards. Currently, state government rules provide for this “card-check” method of union certification as an alternative to the traditional union election.

The 156 cards represented 51.5 percent — a majority — but Lottery management is holding off on recognizing the union because 17 workers who signed the cards later changed their minds and asked for the cards back. The

state has no rules for what to do in such a situation, so the campaign entered a state of limbo.

Last month, 133 workers signed an informal petition calling for a union election to be held in order to settle the matter. The petition was signed by both pro and anti-union workers, with both sides expecting to win.

At press time, pro-union workers planned to meet to discuss their options.



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Carpenters set toy drive record

Grand totals have been calculated, and the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters set new records for contributions to the Portland Fire Bureau’s “Toy and Joy Makers” holiday program.

Last year, Carpenter unions, members, contractors and associations collected \$4,200 in cash and 993 gifts to be distributed in the metro area. An additional 404 gifts were distributed in outlying areas.

During the last seven years, the Car-

penters have raised more than \$20,000 and collected nearly 10,000 toys, said Bruce Dennis, president of the Regional Council and coordinator of the toy drive.

“This would not be possible without our union contractors, associations and various community organizations as partners,” Dennis said.

Participants in the toy drive each receives a hardwood plaque of recognition specially made by students at the Timberlake Job Corps Center.

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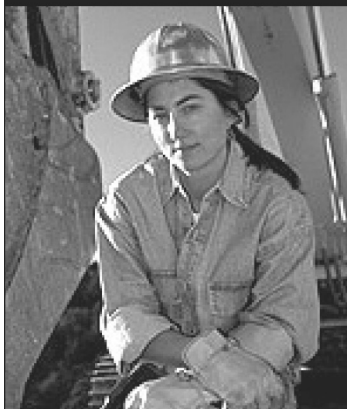
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