



'Fat-cat' at the Benson Tower

Union construction workers leafleted the sales center/show room of the Benson Tower Condominiums March 9 where the Hoyt Realty Group was holding an open house. Officials from the Laborers Union inflated a "fat-cat" choking a worker at the corner of SW 5th and Clay St. in downtown Portland to symbolize how some workers are not receiving area standard wages and benefits. The Laborers and Carpenters unions have a dispute with project subcontractor Newway Forming Inc. Those two unions have held numerous rallies at the Benson Tower since it broke ground more than a year ago. The \$30 million, 26-story condominium at 1500 SW 11th Ave. at Clay St. is being built by Canadian contractor ITC and is using a lot of out-of-state and out-of-country workers. And even though a few union subcontractors are on the project, the rallies have drawn strong support from construction unions. Bill Hoffman, an organizer for the Laborers Union, handed out a leaflet March 9 stating that a plumbing contractor on the project had its business license revoked for "egregious acts," that another subcontractor had violated the National Labor Relations Act for illegally firing workers, and that the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration has issued multiple citations to subcontractors for violating safety regulations. The developer of the Benson Tower is Portlander Joe Weston of Weston Investment Management and American Property Management.

Oregon Lottery workers file for union election

SALEM — Pro-union workers at the Oregon Lottery Commission are pressing ahead with the traditional route to unionizing. On March 14, they asked the Oregon Employment Relations Board to conduct a union election.

If a majority of the Lottery's 300 workers vote to join Service Employees International Union Local 503, management would have to recognize the union and negotiate a contract. In mid-November, the union sought recognition on the basis of signed authorization cards, but management declined, saying some workers had changed their minds.

Lottery hotline operator Patricia Paolazzi said workers don't see the union as a ticket to riches; they just want to have a say, like most of the state's workers.



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