

## Local 516 charter member George Pavlich awarded 70-year card

The last surviving founding member of Iron Workers Shopmen's Local 516 was honored at the union's monthly meeting Dec. 16 with a 70-year pin and gold watch.

George Pavlich, 93, joined the union on April 30, 1937, working for M. Reuter & Sons.

Following a stint in the Merchant Marine during World War II, Pavlich returned to Portland where he worked for Reuter & Sons until 1972. He also worked short stints at Steel Fab and Federal before retiring in 1979.

He and his wife, Elenore, married in 1943. They have been together ever since. She couldn't attend the union presentation because she was home babysitting great grandchildren.

"I'm glad I joined the union," he told about 60 members who attended the meeting. "It's been good to me."



## Bus operators to take strike vote in Corvallis

CORVALLIS — City transit and school bus drivers in Corvallis are expected to vote Jan. 16 to reject a contract offer and authorize a strike.

The City of Corvallis contracts management of its bus system to Laidlaw, and so does Corvallis School District. Laidlaw has a rocky history of relations with its unions, including Portland-based Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757.

In Corvallis, trouble began in 1996 with Local 757's original organizing campaign, when Laidlaw fought to have city and school bus drivers together in the same bargaining unit, hoping to defeat the union drive. There are about a dozen drivers for the 11-route Corvallis Transit System, and about 50 school bus operators. The union agreed to combine the two, and won a 1997 union election.

Faced with a brick-wall negotiating stance, the union fought for and passed a 1999 local ballot measure that set city bus drivers' wages at the average

for the region. Wages jumped about \$6 an hour to between \$12 and \$14 an hour. Since then, Laidlaw has said it won't pay any more than the ballot measure requires, says Ron Heintzman, the ATU international representative assigned to bargain for the group. But that's not what it means to bargain, Heintzman says.

"To be locked into third-party contract terms for over six years, with no opportunity to have any voice in changing those terms, was in our view not intended nor acceptable any longer," Heintzman wrote in an e-mail explaining the union's position to Corvallis city manager Jon Nelson.

Meanwhile, for the school bus drivers, Heintzman said it took six years for the company to agree to replace previous pay levels with a five-year, five-step wage schedule, and now the company is proposing to scrap that.

The union is recommending a "no" vote on the offer and a "yes" vote to authorize a strike.

# Public pressure pushes Goodyear to settle pact with striking Steelworkers

PITTSBURGH (PAI) — Public pressure and protests from coast-to-coast — including leaflets, picket signs and marches — forced Goodyear Tire Co., back to the bargaining table in mid-December and produced a new three-year contract on Dec. 22, the United Steelworkers announced.

USW members ratified the pact by a more than 2-to-1 margin on Dec. 28, among more than 10,000 members voting. It won majorities at all 12 Goodyear locals.

The pact ended a strike that began in early October. But the pressure that pushed Goodyear back to bargaining came when the Steelworkers marshaled tens of thousands of unionists and their supporters for Dec. 16 demonstrations at 168 retail tire outlets nationwide (including Oregon and Washington), letting consumers know how the firm was trying to mistreat both its workers and retirees.

Goodyear's key demands were that the now-profitable tire firm close its Tyler, Texas, plant — putting 1,100 union members out of work — and shift production to China; and eliminate health insurance for retirees and their families. It backed down on both.

"We owe gratitude to the labor and activist communities, which rose with unprecedented solidarity to challenge Goodyear's assault," said Steelworkers President Leo Gerard.

Gerard said Goodyear's initial de-

mands "were at the heart of what's wrong with America today: Global corporations running away" from the U.S. and from their commitments to workers and the middle class.

Union members were particularly miffed because several years ago they helped Goodyear get through some financial hardships by agreeing to wage and benefit freezes.

Goodyear returned to profitability soon after that, but they "walked away from their promises" when that contract expired, the Steelworkers said.

National AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said the national solidarity let Goodyear — and other companies — know that for U.S. workers "enough is enough" in terms of "exporting good-paying jobs to countries whose lack of labor law enforcement is more disgraceful than our own."

According to the Steelworkers, the new contract:

- Sets up a company-financed trust of more than \$1 billion that will go to secure medical and prescription drug benefits for current and future retirees.

- Commits Goodyear to tripling capital invested in union-represented plants to at least \$550 million, to "meet the challenges of global competition."

- Puts off the closure of the Tyler plant until the end of 2007. Instead, there will be a one-year transition period to give Tyler's workers the chance to take "sizable retirement buyouts,"

the union said.

And even though the plant will eventually close, tires now made there will have to be produced at Steelworker-represented plants in the U.S., Conway said. "The company simply won't be able to outsource that work or service this market segment with imports from China or anywhere other than a Steelworker facility."

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