

Union members ask Portland to take anti-sweatshop action

At a Feb. 19 rally, Portland Fire Fighters Local 43 Vice President Ed Hall linked current anti-sweatshop campaigns to campaigns at the dawn of the labor movement. A 1911 fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist factory killed 146 New York City garment workers, Hall said, but led to better factory safety standards — and fire safety codes that fire fighters enforce in Portland and elsewhere.

“But it is now the 21st century,” Hall said, “and children are still working and dying in sweatshops.”

Last February, Hall noted, 54 workers, some of them children, died in the KTS Composite Textiles factory in Chittagong, Bangladesh.

“As a firefighter, when I go to work and I put on my uniform, I want to



Portland firefighter Ed Hall addresses a crowd at City Hall Feb. 19 calling on the City of Portland to pass a resolution that ensures it is not purchasing goods made under sweatshop conditions that violate labor laws. Hall is a vice president of Fire Fighters Local 43.

know that the company that makes that shirt and pants supports the same values we do ... having a safe and fair workplace.”

Hall and other activists are calling on the City of Portland to ensure it is not purchasing goods made under conditions that violate labor laws.

About 110 people attended the noon-hour rally, held outside Portland City Hall on Presidents Day. A former sweatshop worker from Bangalore, India, told of managers abusing the mostly young, female workforce, and said he was arrested for trying to

unionize factory workers at a shop that produces goods for Wal-Mart. And a Colombian woman who worked 10 years at a flower plantation that sells to Albertsons and Wal-Mart described allergies and skin problems

from excessive fungicides and pesticides.

Oregon Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner also said he favors passage of a local anti-sweatshop ordinance, saying his agency, the Bureau of Labor

and Industries, was founded in 1903 to study conditions in factories.

“We must not allow public money to go to companies that don’t comply with basic labor laws,” Gardner said.

The Portland Sweatfree Campaign, backed by 13 local unions and the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, has been meeting with staff in City Hall, but so far no commissioners have committed to anything but a symbolic resolution.

“We don’t want a feel-good ordinance,” said Kate Lore, social justice coordinator for the First Unitarian Church. “We want one with teeth.”

Labor bowl for MDA scheduled Sunday, April 22

The 18th annual Labor Bowl Challenge to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) will be held Sunday, April 22, from 1 to 4 p.m. at Cascade Lanes, 2700 NE 82nd Ave., Portland.

Portland area labor unions have collected \$276,041 for the charity. Money raised from pledges and a silent auction helps provide wheelchairs and braces for youngsters, medical care, research and summer camps.

Pledge packets are available at the Northwest Oregon Labor Council or by calling Tor at MDA at 503-223-3177.

Tickets on sale to win motorcycle and help sick children

Tickets are on sale to win a new Harley-Davidson motorcycle and raise funds for Doernbecher Children’s Hospital in Portland.

The fifth annual Motorcycle Poker Run and Chili Cook-Off will be held Saturday, June 9 in Northeast Portland. The event is sponsored by “Unions for Kids,” a non-profit organization comprised of members of various unions in Portland and Southwest Washington.

Tickets to win the motorcycle — a 2007 suede blue and black Dyna Low-Rider FXDL — are \$10 each. Only 3,500 tickets will be sold. The motorcycle is on display at the IBEW United Workers Federal Credit Union, 9955 SE Washington St., Portland.

For more information, go to www.unionsforkids.org or call Lee Duncan at 503-260-5905.

The Hometown Home Loan Program has helped over 4,000 union members buy and refinance their homes. We understand the needs of union members and offer:

- Reduced closing costs on purchases and refinances
- Down payment assistance programs
- Free homeownership education and counseling
- Zero down, remodeling, and interest only loans

Call us or visit us online for more information. (The Hometown program is only available through HomeStreet’s Affinity Lending Center.)

Portland/Vancouver 503-227-3956
888-408-0066 (Toll-Free)

Salem 503-364-0385
866-865-6011 (Toll-Free)

HomeStreet Bank
Great neighbors. Great bankers.

homestreet.com/union

Homeownership is the American Dream. We can help you finance it.



Oregon Governor’s Occupational Safety & Health Conference

MARCH 12-15, 2007

Oregon Convention Center ★ Portland

For registration and exhibit information: contact the Conference Section at (503) 378-3272 or e-mail: oregon.gosh@state.or.us

Also, visit the following Web sites: assecwc.org or orosha.org/conferences

A joint effort of ASSE, Columbia-Willamette Chapter, and Oregon OSHA