

# Building Trades unions rap Vancouver City Council for opposition to Cowlitz casino

VANCOUVER — The Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council has sent a letter to Mayor Royce Pollard and the entire Vancouver City Council expressing their disappointment in a recent vote to oppose construction of a tribal casino in LaCenter.

The resolution, which passed 7-0, doesn't just oppose the casino, it also says the city will sue if the federal Department of the Interior approves the casino in its present form.

CPBCTC signed a project labor agreement with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe last year assuring that the \$510 million project would be built union. The proposed site is 152 acres at the La Center exit of Interstate 5, which is about 16 miles north of the Interstate Bridge.

At a press conference prior to the council vote, Pollard said he wasn't opposed to the casino itself, just the location in LaCenter in Clark County. He suggested it be located farther north, in Cowlitz or Lewis counties. Pollard said a casino of that magnitude would be a detriment to the city. He expressed concerns about traffic, gambling's impact on society and the lack of family-wage jobs after the casino is built.

"The bottom line is that I believe the proposed Cowlitz casino is not in the

best interests of the citizens of Clark County and Vancouver," Pollard said.

At an Executive Board meeting of the CPBCTC a day after the Council vote, union officials were unhappy that commissioners weighed in on a project that isn't in their jurisdiction. "Will they oppose the proposed casino at the dog track (in Fairview, Oregon) next?" one

union official asked. CPBCTC also has a project labor agreement signed with the developers of that proposed facility, which is worth tens of millions of dollars in construction work.

A ruling by the Interior Department on the tribe's application to create the reservation and establish a casino is not expected until the end of the year.



## Labor history group awards unionists

Ed Barnes (above center) was named "Labor History Person of the Year" May 11 at an awards banquet kicking off the 39th annual Pacific Northwest Labor History Association Conference. Barnes, a retired business manager of Portland Electrical Workers Local 48, collected the award after lengthy accolades from Nellie Fox-Edwards (left) and Don Patch (right). Barnes served his electrician apprenticeship under Fox-Edwards' late husband. Barnes' three sons also became union electricians, and two were there to witness the award. "If you're going to be a union member," Barnes said, "don't be a card carrier; go and get involved in your union." The Labor Education and Research Center of the University of Oregon also received an award. LERC Director Bob Bussel told attendees he has the union movement to thank for the continued existence of the program. The Labor History conference was held at the NECA-IBEW Local 48 Training Center in Portland.

## Portland Letter Carriers bring in 669,501 pounds of food

Union letter carriers once again stepped up to "stamp out hunger" in the nation's largest one-day effort May 12. For the 15th year in a row, members of National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) went door to door on their regular Saturday mail routes to pick up bags of non-perishable food donated by residents in bags delivered earlier. The bags, delivered earlier, were paid for by other unions, and came printed with union logos.

With 220,000 letter carriers in the United States, the drive is the largest union sponsored charity event by far. "It's our favorite day of the year," said L.C. Hansen, president of Port-

land-based NALC Branch 82.

The drive touches all 50 states and involves nearly 1,500 NALC branches, as well as rural carriers and other volunteers. In some areas, including Portland, postmasters allow letter carriers to pick up the bags on the clock. In others, they do the pickups as volunteers.

The Portland metro area alone collected 669,501 pounds of food, an increase of 19 percent over last year's total. Statewide and national totals for 2007 weren't yet available, but last year the drive netted 1.4 million pounds in Oregon and 70.5 million pounds nationwide.

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