

SEIU #503 reaches tentative contract with nursing homes

Nursing home owners from four different chains and Service Employees Local 503 reached a tentative agreement Aug. 5 on a new contract.

The four year contract, which covers over 800 workers, calls for \$2.65 cent per hour wage and benefit improvements over the life of the agreement. Wage increases are effective Oct. 1 each year at 70 cents, 50 cents, 60 cents and 50 cents.

Benefit improvements ranged from putting money into a health care flex account, helping offset the costs of health care, to establishing shift differentials.

Starting in the spring of 2008, improved staffing ratios in nursing homes will be phased in from 10 to 7 residents per staff person on day shift, from 15 to 11 on evening shift, and from 25 to 18 on the night shift.

"We're very proud of this contract. It is a big win for residents and workers," said Diane King, a nursing home employee in Oregon City. "The wage increases and improvements in our contract will help us attract and retain skilled workers. Because of that we can staff up and greatly improve the quality of life for our residents."

The new contract is a result of an Oregon commission created due to the joint advocacy efforts of SEIU and Nursing Home Operators. In 2006 Governor Ted Kulongoski agreed to appoint a commission to study the relationship between staffing ratios and quality care in nursing homes. The recommendations of the Commission were achieved primarily because the 2007 Oregon Legislature approved \$3 million to implement improved staffing ratios.

The nursing home chains affected by the new agreement are Prestige, Avamere, Evergreen and Pinnacle.

They have homes in Portland, Hillsboro, Clackamas, Hood River, The Dalles, Salem, Lebanon, Independence, Milton-Freewater, Pendleton, LaGrande and Ashland.

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Happy Labor Day!

**OREGON STATE BUILDING AND
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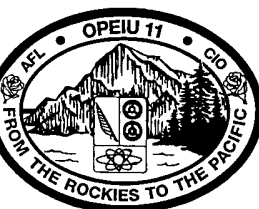
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Happy Labor Day 2007!



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THE FIRST LABOR DAY

Two men have been credited with suggesting a holiday to honor working people in the United States — Matthew Maguire, a machinist from Paterson, N.J., and Peter J. McGuire, a New York City carpenter who founded the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners. Both men played an important part in staging the first Labor Day parade in New York City on Sept. 5, 1882. In 1887, in accordance with the plans of the Central Labor Council, Oregon became the first state to make Labor Day a legal holiday.

In 1884 the first Monday in September was selected to be the holiday, as originally proposed, and the Central Labor Council urged similar organizations in other cities to follow the example of New York and celebrate a "workingmen's holiday" on that date. The idea spread with the growth of labor organizations, and in 1885 Labor Day was celebrated in many individual centers of the country.

As the years went by the nation gave increasing emphasis to Labor Day. The first governmental recognition came through municipal ordinances passed during 1885 and 1886. From them developed the movement to secure state legislation. The first state bill was introduced into the New York Legislature, but the first to become law was passed by Oregon on Feb. 21, 1887. During the year four more states — Colorado, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York — created the Labor Day holiday by legislative enactment. By the end of the decade Connecticut, Nebraska, and Pennsylvania had followed suit.



By 1894, 23 other states had adopted the holiday in honor of workers, and on June 28 of that year Congress passed an act making the first Monday in September of each year a legal holiday in the District of Columbia and the territories. President Grover Cleveland signed it into law making Labor Day a national holiday.

**Have a safe and happy Labor Day
from
the Members, Executive Board
and Staff of IBEW Local 125**