

Firms whose employees use state benefits to be named

SALEM — The state agency that administers food stamps and Medicaid has agreed to give Oregon lawmakers what some have been seeking for four years: the names of employers whose workers are getting public assistance.

In an Aug. 14 letter to State Rep. Diane Rosenbaum, Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) government relations director Patricia O'Sullivan promised a report in the fall of 2008. DHS already asks for the name of the employer, if any, on applications for food stamps and the Oregon Health Plan. But up to now, that information has stayed on the paper applications in DHS district offices. Starting this fall, DHS will add a field to its database system so that it can capture the information automatically.

In other states where such information is publicly available, union activists have used it to publicly shame low-wage employers, and to argue for employer health care mandates. Wal-Mart is the prototypical large employer whose workers frequently earn low enough wages that they can't afford the company's health plan and end up qualifying for taxpayer-funded benefits.

Earlier this year when the Oregon Legislature was in session, Rosenbaum had pushed a bill dubbed "the Responsible Employer Act" that would have required the information be made public; it passed the House, but failed to pass the Senate. Both chambers were controlled by Democrats this year for the first time since 1991.

"Our intention was that elected lead-

ers take a look at whether taxpayers are subsidizing large profitable employers by paying for benefits they aren't providing," Rosenbaum told the Labor Press.

In the end, DHS administrators decided to respond to the intent of the legislation. O'Sullivan cautioned that the data is self-reported and isn't verified, and that it represents a snapshot in time based on the day the application was completed.

Still, lawmakers will find it useful, said State Rep. Brad Witt, who is also a staff member at United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555.

"Now the public will have an opportunity to see which companies are shifting payroll costs to the taxpayers," Witt said.

In a letter to House Democrats, Rosenbaum called the DHS decision a victory for working families and responsible employers. "I am sure some employers will be those we expect and others will be a surprise."

PAIN RELIEF

for ... joint pain, neck/ back pain,
chronic injury
Physical Therapy
503-239-6199
407 NE 12th PDX
insurance accepted

Swanson, Thomas & Coon

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Since 1981

James Coon
Jacqueline Jacobson

Ray Thomas
Margaret Weddell

Kimberly Tucker
Cynthia F. Newton

In honor of Labor Day, Swanson Thomas & Coon would like to thank all the hard-working men and women who make this country great and the labor organizations that bring them together to work for justice.

We represent people on all types of injury and disease related claims.

- Workers' Compensation
- Construction Injuries
- Asbestos/Mesothelioma
- Personal Injury/Product Liability
- Death Claims
- Social Security Disability

We provide straight answers at no cost on any of the above areas of law.

CALL US or VISIT OUR WEB SITE

(503) 228-5222

<http://www.stc-law.com>

Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Family, Mill Wrights, Painters, Elevators, Plasterers



9955 SE Washington St
PO Box 16877
Portland, Oregon 97292
www.ibewuwfcu.com

Let us help you with all of your back to school needs. We currently offer easy to access **LINES OF CREDIT** and a variety of **VISA PRODUCTS** to help you make the grade.



Call or visit us online at
800-356-6507 or
ibewuwfcu.com



Glaziers, Carpenters, Laborers, Electricians, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Family, Mill Wrights, Painters, Elevators, Plasterers

Get your dog registered as a service dog
Any person with a medical condition can have a service dog. You can train your own dog. It's simple!
Visit our website [first](http://www.registeredservicedogs.com) at www.registeredservicedogs.com
360-581-4979
Hoquiam, WA

NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS
(International Standard Serial Number 0894-444X)
Established in 1900 at Portland, Oregon as a voice of the labor movement.
4275 NE Halsey St., P.O. Box 13150, Portland, Ore. 97213
Telephone: (503) 288-3311
E-mail: Michael492@comcast.net
Editor: Michael Gutwig
Staff: Don McIntosh, Cheri Rice
Published on a semi-monthly basis on the first and third Fridays of each month by the Oregon Labor Press Publishing Co. Inc., a non-profit corporation owned by 20 unions and councils including the Oregon AFL-CIO. Serving more than 120 union organizations in Oregon and SW Washington. Subscriptions \$13.75 per year for union members.
Group rates available to trade union organizations.
PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT PORTLAND, OREGON.
CHANGE OF ADDRESS NOTICE: Three weeks are required for a change of address. When ordering a change, please give your old and new addresses and the name and number of your local union.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS, P.O. BOX 13150-0150, PORTLAND, OR 97213