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Portland Hilton workers rally

Several hundred hotel workers and supporters marched outside the downtown Portland Hilton Hotel and Executive Tower Sept. 14 to protest slow progress in contract bargaining. Workers wore red T-shirts printed with "Hotel Workers Rising." That's the name of a national campaign by their union, UNITE HERE, to increase union power in the hotel industry. In Portland, UNITE HERE Local 9's contract covering the downtown Hilton workers expired at the end of July. Hilton pastry chef Megan Futrell, a member of the union bargaining team, said the two sides haven't begun to discuss wages. Futrell said union priorities include a reduced workload for the hotel's housekeepers, a successorship clause to protect workers in the event the hotel is sold, and the right of the local union elected officials to take extended unpaid leave from work while serving their terms. Currently the hotel only allows six months.



Sweeney, Edwards will headline AFL-CIO confab

SEASIDE — The Oregon AFL-CIO will hold its 50th convention Sunday through Wednesday, Oct. 7-10, at the Seaside Convention Center.

National AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, Democratic presidential candidate John Edwards, and Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski are scheduled to address convention delegates.

Sweeney is slated to speak at 10 a.m. on the opening day, Monday, Oct. 8. Kulongoski is scheduled to appear at 4:30 p.m.

On Tuesday, Oct. 9, at 10 a.m., Edwards, a former U.S. senator from North Carolina who ran for vice president in 2006 on the John Kerry ticket, will address delegates.

On Wednesday, delegates will elect new officers and Executive Board members. Both president and secretary-treasurer posts are up this year. President Tom Chamberlain is completing the term of Tim Nesbitt, who stepped down in mid-term, and Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Byrd completed the term of Brad Witt, who was deemed ineligible to following the departure of United Food and Commercial Workers to the Change to Win labor federation. Nominations will be held at 11:45

a.m. Oct. 8.

The convention begins at 9 a.m. all three days.

A welcome party will be held on Sunday, Oct. 7, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., at the Best Western Oceanview Motel, which also will serve as the convention headquarters. The state labor federation's Executive Board, General Board and Committee on Political Education will meet Sunday starting at 1 p.m. at the Best Western Oceanview Motel.

After adjournment on Monday, Oct. 8, delegates will canvass sections of the city with Working America, a community affiliate of the national AFL-CIO that is partnering with labor to create a massive workers' movement. After the canvass, volunteers will have a barbecue at Broadway Park in Seaside.

At 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 9, the popular Union Label Show will be held at the Seaside Convention Center.

An Executive Board meeting will be held immediately following adjournment on Oct. 10.

Delegates can register from noon to 8 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 7 at the Best Western Oceanview Motel, and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday and Tuesday, Oct. 8-9, at the Convention Center.

Of the national AFL-CIO

Chavez-Thompson steps down as executive vice president

WASHINGTON, D.C. — National AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson will step down to return home to San Antonio and be with her family, effective Sept. 21.

Chavez-Thompson, 63, is the first person to hold the office of executive vice president and the first person of color to hold one of the top elected offices at the AFL-CIO. She was elected in 1995 after serving in a series of leadership roles in the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and on the AFL-CIO Executive Council.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney will ask the Executive Council to appoint Arlene Holt-Baker to fill Chavez-Thompson's unexpired term (2009). Holt-Baker, also a member of AFSCME, has served as Sweeney's executive assistant for the past several years. She came to the federation from California in 1995 as the executive assistant to Chavez-Thompson.

If approved, Holt-Baker will become the first black woman to hold a leadership position in the national AFL-CIO.

Chavez-Thompson, who joined the union movement 40 years ago, is a second-generation American and the daughter of cotton sharecroppers. She says she hopes she has been able to raise the



National AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, who resigned as of Sept. 21, was a familiar face in Oregon. Here she talks to union members at the 2005 Labor Day picnic at Oaks Park in Portland.

voice of those who often are unheard or left behind.

Chavez-Thompson traveled extensively throughout the country speaking to union and community groups. She has worked tirelessly to strengthen state and local labor movements and has served as a strong voice on behalf of civil rights, human rights and women's rights. She also has been a national leader on the issue of immigration and immigrant workers' rights.

"For millions, she was the face of the AFL-CIO's new union movement," said President John Sweeney. "Linda has broken new pathways for the labor movement. Countless working women and men, not only in the United States but throughout the Western Hemisphere, have a better life because of all she's contributed."

Chavez-Thompson will continue to chair the AFL-CIO Immigration Committee and serve as head of the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers, the International Trade Union Confederation's regional organization for the Americas. She also will serve as an adviser to state federations and labor councils.

Under the AFL-CIO Constitution, she will become the AFL-CIO's first executive vice president emerita.