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Multnomah ESD employees to consider strike

Employees of the Multnomah Educational Service District represented by AFSCME Local 1995 rallied in front of the District's main office in Northeast Portland Oct. 16 to protest stalled contract negotiations. The union will conduct a strike authorization vote Nov. 13. That decision was triggered after MESD declared impasse in the current contract negotiations. The contract fight comes barely 18 months after the previous round of bargaining ended with some 380 MESD workers on the verge of a strike. In early March 2006, over 82 percent of MESD employees voted to authorize a strike before settling the contract later that month. However, that two-year contract was retroactive to July 1, 2005, meaning negotiations began again earlier this year on a successor contract. MESD is governed by an elected, unpaid, seven-member Board of Directors. MESD's superintendent is Ron Hitchcock. Due to state labor laws, the earliest workers can strike would be Nov. 25. On Nov. 9, AFSCME will hold a special "town hall" meeting to present information and ramifications of the impending strike vote.

Labor Arts Festival slated Nov. 10 at PSU

The Pacific Northwest Labor Arts Festival will be held Saturday, Nov. 10, from 1 to 9 p.m. at Portland State University. The first-ever event in Oregon will feature music, art, drama and film depicting the historical culture, values and struggles of the working class. The festival is free and open to the public.

The Oregon Legislature in 1991 proclaimed November as Labor History Month. To celebrate, the History Committee of the Northwest Oregon Labor Council has staged events annually to help tell labor's story.

This year's festival is its most ambitious project ever.

Headlining the Labor Arts Festival will be Anne Feeney, one of America's foremost labor singer/songwriters. Also performing will be Rebel Voices from Seattle; hip-hop artist Mic Crenshaw of Portland, and banjo master Dick Weissman. Weissman, who composed music for the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers, toured with the legendary Journeymen, along with John Phillips (Mamas & Papas) and Scott McKenzie (*If You Go To San Francisco, Be Sure To Wear Some Flowers In Your Hair*).

The AFTRA Radio Players will present a stage reading of Studs Terkel's *American Dreams*. AFTRA is the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.

Art will include works from internationally-acclaimed Swedish political and labor artist Julie Leonardsson, as well as selected Works Progress Administration (WPA)-period pieces from the Museum of People's Art in Bay City, Oregon. Union memorabilia, photography and murals also will be on display.

Author/historians David A. Horowitz (*The People's Voice: Populist Cultural Expression*) and Michael Munk (*The Portland Red Guide*) will lead panel discussions on local labor struggles and solidarity and labor-related films will be shown throughout the afternoon.

"This free multi-cultural event will be inspiring, motivating and empowering to all working people," said Festival Coordinator Jim Cook, a recently retired member of the National Association of Letter Carriers and chair of the History Committee.

The festival will take place at various locations at PSU, including the Smith Memorial Student Union, the Native American Student Center and rooms at Neuberger and Cramer halls. For more info, contact Cook at 503-703-1693 or go to www.nwlaborarts.org.

(Donations to offset the cost of the Labor Arts Festival are still needed. To date, \$8,500 of the \$10,000 goal has been raised. To donate, call Cook.)

AFL-CIO rates Oregon lawmakers on 2007 session

By DON McINTOSH
Associate Editor

SALEM — The Oregon AFL-CIO has completed its ranking of state lawmakers for their 2007 session of the Oregon Legislature.

This year, the Oregon AFL-CIO used a new and more complicated methodology to rate legislators, in order to better describe the full picture of support or opposition to Oregon's labor movement priorities. In the past, the Oregon AFL-CIO rated lawmakers according to their votes on a list of priority bills, and expressed the ratings as a percentage. For example, you could say a given lawmaker voted in accord with the Oregon AFL-CIO 90 percent of the time. Those scores were known as COPE ratings, after the AFL-CIO's Committee On Political Education.

The national AFL-CIO still rates members of Congress that way.

The new method weights different bills according to how important they are, and gives lawmakers "points" for acts besides voting, such as co-sponsoring bills, giving bills hearings in committees they chair, testifying or lobbying in favor of bills, even walking union picket lines.

Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain said the new method will ensure that those legislators who go the extra mile for labor will get credit for it. In cases where legislators are on the opposite side of the AFL-CIO, points are deducted. Legislators with the highest points are grouped in gold, silver and bronze categories as "Working Families Champions."

In the Senate, five lawmakers — all Democ-

rats — tied for the top spot: Brad Avakian and Kate Brown of Portland, Floyd Prozanski and Vicki Walker of Eugene, and Ben Westlund of Tumalo. All but Prozanski are running for higher office in 2008.

All but three Senate Democrats got a gold, silver or bronze designation. Those three, in effect the least labor-friendly as tallied by the Oregon AFL-CIO, were Joanne Verger of Coos Bay, Ginny Burdick of Portland, and Kurt Schrader of Canby.

Among Senate Republicans, Frank Morse of Albany was the most labor-friendly at minus-38, while Ted Ferrioli of John Day took the title of most anti-labor senator in 2007 at minus-347.

In the House, the top rankings went to Democrats Diane Rosenbaum of Southeast Port-

land with a whopping 815 points, and Speaker Jeff Merkley of East Portland with 725 points.

Rosenbaum, a long-time member of Communications Workers of America Local 7901 and current president of the National Labor Caucus of State Legislators, is vacating her House seat in 2008 to run for an open Senate seat in District 21, where Kate Brown is giving up that post to run for secretary of state.

Merkley is leaving the House to run for the U.S. Senate.

All House Democrats received the Oregon AFL-CIO's gold, silver or bronze designation for the session. John Lim of Gresham was rated the most labor-friendly Republican with a minus-15, followed closely by Vicki Berger of

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