

# AFL-CIO calls for Hilton boycott

The Oregon AFL-CIO has agreed to support a boycott of the downtown Portland Hilton Hotel & Executive Tower, and at its Dec. 11 quarterly meeting, called on affiliated unions to support the boycott.

UNITE HERE Local 9, which represents workers at the hotel, is battling management in contract negotiations, and is asking supporters not to patronize the hotel until a new union contract

is signed. UNITE HERE, while a member of the Change to Win labor federation, is also affiliated with Oregon AFL-CIO under a Solidarity Charter agreement.

As one of only three unionized hotels in Portland, the Hilton has been a favored spot for unions to hold events.

The Oregon AFL-CIO resolution had immediate impact. Gary Gillespie, delegate from Oregon AFSCME, said

several dozen AFSCME officials are visiting Portland in March; they would have stayed at the Hilton, Gillespie said, but now will stay elsewhere.

Local 9 boycott coordinator Eryn Slack said the union would prefer supporters patronize another unionized hotel if possible, but if not, that even a nonunion hotel would be preferable to the downtown Portland Hilton for the duration of the boycott.

## ...AFSCME will pursue MESD lawsuits

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However, those workers will not be required to actually return to work until their first regularly scheduled shift on or after Jan. 2, 2008.

Additionally, Loving said AFSCME will not drop two lawsuits and an unfair labor practice complaint filed during the strike.

A federal lawsuit filed Dec. 12 in U.S. District Court seeks injunctive relief and damages from MESD for allegedly violating union members' rights of free speech under both the U.S. and Oregon constitutions by issuing threats and directives intended to limit the union's lawful picketing and hand-billing activities.

A second lawsuit filed in Dec. 13 in

Multnomah County Circuit Court charges MESD with willfully violating Oregon's open meetings law. The suit contends that MESD canceled its regularly scheduled Nov. 20 public meeting at 7 p.m. because it knew union members planned to attend the session and speak out against the board's plan to implement its final contract offer. On Nov. 17, the district sent an e-mail to constituents that the Nov. 20 meeting would be canceled, but that there would be an Executive Session held via telephone on Nov. 19. Ultimately the board met again by teleconference on 9 a.m. Nov. 20, at which time it voted to implement its final offer.

"MESD has violated the law in several areas," Loving said. "Oregon's open meetings law requires the district

to give adequate public notice and conduct operations 'in the sunshine' of public scrutiny. In addition, if a governing body is aware that a certain group of persons have a special interest in a particular action, those persons must be notified."

Loving said the union was never notified of the changes in the meetings, that the e-mail notice of the time changes did not meet the general requirements of public notification, and that the district did not make any place available for anyone from the public to listen to the teleconferences as is required by law.

The ULP complaint focuses on MESD's refusal to bargain in good faith, as required by law.

# Sheet Metal to merge with UTU

The 150,000-member Sheet Metal Workers International Association (SMWIA) and 85,000-member United Transportation Union (UTU) are combining to form a new union — SMART (International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers). The merger is effective Jan. 1, but there are no plans to merge locals.

SMWIA members are mostly in

construction and manufacturing, with some in shipyards. UTU are mostly in rail, with some in transit and airline. SMWIA members are unionized under the legal framework of the National Labor Relations Act, while UTU members are under the Railway Labor Act.

SMWIA General President Mike Sullivan will be general president of SMART.

## Peter DeFazio

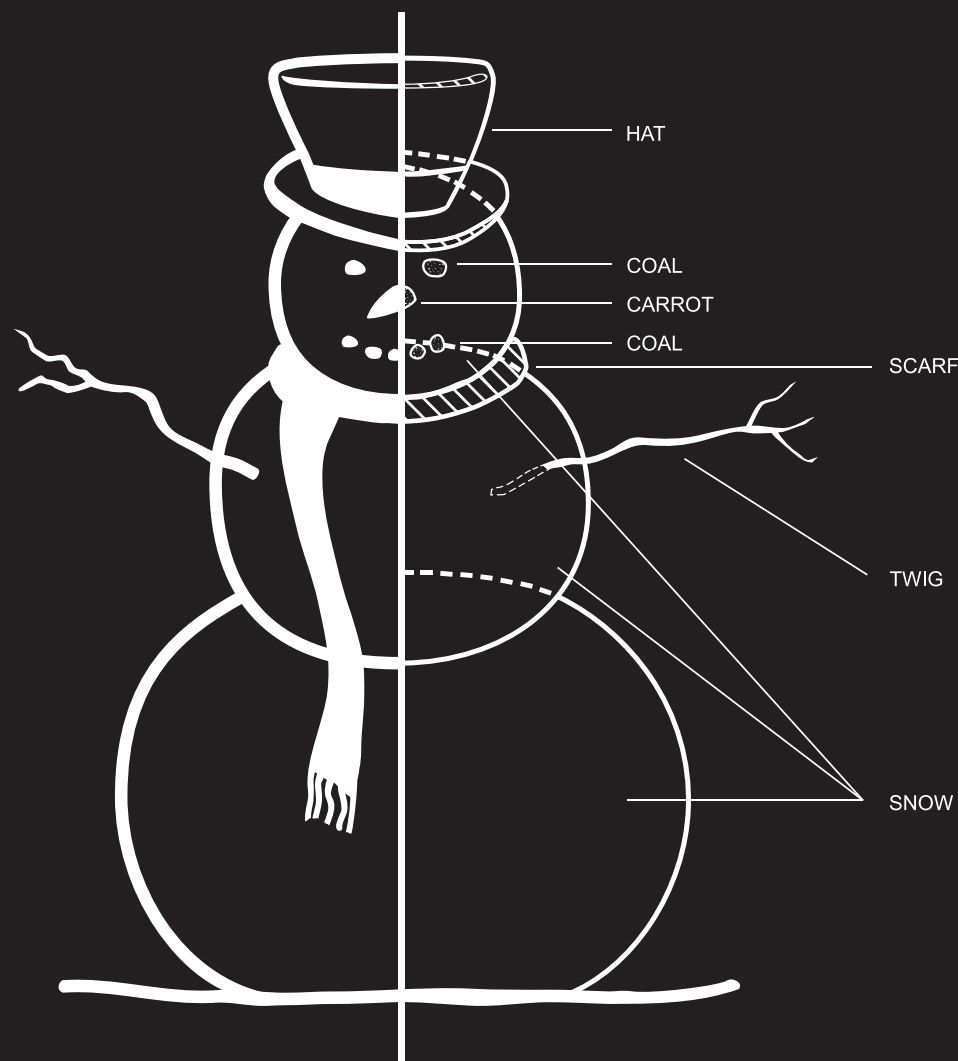
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