



Unions for Kids poker run gets a kick start

Lee Duncan (left) of IBEW Local 48 receives a check for \$5,000 from Mark Kenney, service manager of McKinstry Co., for the sixth annual Unions for Kids Motorcycle Poker Run scheduled for June 14. McKinstry, a unionized mechanical contractor with offices in Portland and Seattle, and the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters, are the first-ever title sponsors for the fund-raising event for Doernbecher Children's Hospital. In addition to registration fees for the poker run, money is raised through a raffle for a new Harley-Davidson. Tickets are now on sale at \$10 each for a chance to win a 2008 Dyna Low Rider FXDL 105th anniversary limited edition bike. Only 3,500 tickets will be sold. The organization also is challenging unions and contractors to help with a \$1,000 Club sponsorship. Unions for Kids is a non-profit organization comprised of members of unions and union contractors in the area. The group has raised \$71,000 for Doernbecher in just five years. For more information, call Duncan at 503-260-5905.

Unions help Share program

VANCOUVER — Several labor unions are helping Share, a non-profit organization that provides shelter, food and emergency services for people in Southwest Washington, through sponsorships at its fundraising events.

Share is holding a Mardi Gras Gala — the first of its four major fundraisers — Saturday, Feb. 2, from 5 to 11 p.m. at the Vancouver Hilton Hotel. The gala includes wine and hors d'oeuvres, a New Orleans-style dinner, casino-style gambling and silent and live auctions.

IBEW Local 48 and EC Electric are sponsoring the silent auction, and Laborers Local 296 is sponsoring a gaming table. Tickets are \$75.

On April 28, a "Share-A-Bowl" dinner fundraiser will feature saxophonist Patrick Lamb, who is a member of Musicians Local 99. IBEW Local 48's Washington Political Action Committee is helping sponsor the event.

For information on sponsoring a Share event, call Pam at 360-695-7658 ext. 309.

IRS fines FedEx \$319 million for independent contractor dodge

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — An employer's continued efforts to misclassify workers as "independent contractors" and avoid paying Social Security taxes, Medicare, workers' compensation insurance and other benefits just got a \$319 million kick in the head.

That's how much the Internal Revenue Service fined FedEx in late December for misclassifying 15,000 of its FedEx Ground pickup and delivery drivers as "independent contractors." FedEx said it will appeal.

Besides the FedEx workers, other independent contractors who really aren't independent abound in the construction industry and among some service industries, such as advertising sales and messengers.

Teamsters President Jim Hoffa hailed the IRS ruling against "FedEx's illegal independent contractor scam."

The day before the IRS ruling, the Massachusetts attorney general also ruled that FedEx Ground illegally misclassified its drivers.

"It's 'game over'" for FedEx, Hoffa said.

The IRS found the problem of misclassified independent contractors is so pervasive that it created new Form 8919 for workers misclassified by their companies. The form, "Uncollected Social Security and Medicare Tax on Wages," will now be

used to figure and report the employee's share of uncollected Social Security and Medicare taxes due on their compensation," the agency explained on Dec. 20 — the day of its FedEx ruling. IRS did not say what it would do about the employer's share of those levies.

"Generally, a worker who receives a Form 1099 for services provided as an independent contractor must report the income on Schedule C and pay self-employment tax on the net profit," IRS explained. "However,

sometimes the worker is incorrectly treated as an independent contractor when they are actually an employee. When this happens, Form 8919 will be used beginning for tax year 2007 by workers who performed services for an employer but the employer did not withhold the worker's share of Social Security and Medicare taxes," the agency added.

Workers who have to file the form are those who receive letters from the IRS saying they're really employees and not independent contractors.

American Federation of Teachers, Oregon Electrical Association endorse Merkley

The Oregon State Association of Electrical Workers and the American Federation of Teachers-Oregon have endorsed State Rep. Jeff Merkley in the Democratic primary for U.S. Senate.

The Association of Electrical Workers and its affiliate local unions represent workers in inside electrical construction, telecommunications, broadcasting, electrical manufacturing and maintenance. "Jeff has been a champion for Oregon workers for nearly a decade in the Legislature," said IBEW Local 48 Business Manager Clif Davis. "He comes from a union family, so he understands the values of fair treatment and hard work."

AFT-Oregon encompasses 20 locals representing some 10,000 workers in K-12, community college and higher education in faculty and classified positions; and child care workers in both public and private sectors.

"Jeff has stood with us for better health care in Oregon, a more stable economy, and his critical role in directing the largest increase in higher education funding in Oregon in memory," said AFT-Oregon President Mark Schwebke.

Seven labor groups, including the Oregon AFL-CIO, have endorsed Merkley. The winner of the May primary will challenge Republican incumbent Gordon Smith.

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