

Sam Adams picks up major labor support for mayor

Portland City Commissioner Sam Adams picked up several labor endorsements last month in his bid to become mayor of the Rose City.

The Northwest Oregon Labor Council endorsed his campaign in a near-unanimous voice vote March 24. The labor council is a coalition of 105 union locals and trade councils with members in Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington and Columbia counties.

Prior to that, Adams won the backing of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, the state's largest private-sector union; from Portland City Employees Local 189, an affiliate of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and the largest union local at the city, and from the Joint Council of Teamsters No. 37.

Adams is in a 15-person race for the seat being vacated by Tom Potter. He is leading in early polling, with his closest opponent Portland businessman Sho Dozono.

Both Adams and Dozono interviewed with the Northwest Oregon Labor Council's Executive Board — and both turned in AFL-CIO questionnaires in which they signed a statement of principles supporting a workers' right to join a union without employer coercion.

"I will be a union mayor, and I won't apologize for it," Adams told the Executive Board.

Adams has a long track record in support of union causes. He has worked



SAM ADAMS

with UFCW Local 555 to oppose new Wal-Mart stores from coming to Portland; he helped get labor a seat on the Portland Development Commission (John Mohlis of the Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council), and he help labor maintain a seat on the workforce investment council. Last year he supported AFSCME in a successful organizing drive at PDC, and he is on board with building trades unions to replace the I-5 bridge over the Columbia River with a new one.

Dozono has a long history of community activism, but has never held an elected post. He has served on the Port of Portland Commission, Portland State University Foundation and Portland

Community College Foundation.

In his questionnaire, he said he opposes so-called right-to-work laws and efforts to impose tip credit on minimum wage restaurant workers. He supports prevailing wage laws and vowed to publicly challenge employers who might interfere when employees are trying to form a union.

Dozono told NOLC's Executive Board that as mayor he would bring a different perspective to city government. "No one on this city council has ever met a payroll," he said. "This is not to say that service isn't good, but they've never met a payroll."

Dozono said that philosophically he is pro-labor and that he has held a union card as a hod carrier, Teamster, Carpenter, and teacher.

However, it wasn't enough to sway delegates, who voted solidly for Adams.

In other races for Portland City Council, NOLC endorsed City Commissioner Randy Leonard for re-election, and backed Mike Fahey, who is seeking to fill a mid-term vacancy due to the resignation of Erik Sten.

Fahey is a former financial secretary-treasurer of the Portland Metal Trades Council and a former Democratic state representative from North Portland. He left the labor movement to open a mortgage company. He is still a member of Pile Drivers, Divers and Shipwrights Local 2416.

There are seven candidates running for the seat.

Leonard is a former president of Portland Fire Fighters Local 43. He was first elected to the council post in 2002 to fill the unexpired term of Charlie Hales. He is facing a challenge from three other candidates.

A recommendation by the NOLC Executive Board to endorse Nick Fish (for the city council seat being vacated by Adams) failed to get a two-thirds majority vote. Seven candidates have filed for that post.

Fish, who lost a city council race to Adams in 2004, has been endorsed by AFSCME Local 189, the Portland Association of Teachers, Teamsters Joint Council 37, and the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters.

In other political action, the Northwest Oregon Labor Council endorsed Judy Shiprack and Carla Piluso in their races for open seats on the Multnomah County Commission. Shiprack is running in District 3 and Piluso is running in District 4.

Piluso, chief of police for the City of Gresham, received unanimous support. Shiprack was able to get a two-thirds' majority despite opposition from AFSCME Local 88 and UFCW Local 555. Local 88 has endorsed health care lobbyist Rob Milesnick and Local 555 is backing Mike Delman. Delman and his father operated a retail business under a collective bargaining agreement with

the former Retail Clerks. Delman was chief of staff to former county commissioner Gary Hansen, a member of Plumbers and Fitters Local 290. He currently is the public affairs director for the Portland Habilitation Center.

NOLC endorsed Craig Roberts for re-election as Clackamas County sheriff and Trent Tidwell for Position 5 on the Clackamas County Commission.

Last year, voters in Clackamas County chose to expand the county's board of commissioners from three to five at-large non-partisan seats. Tidwell, who is as a commissioner in Oregon City, is vying for one of those new seats.

A recommendation by the labor council to endorse the re-election of Columbia County Commissioner Joe Corsiglia failed to win a two-thirds majority. Corsiglia is facing Democratic opposition from Earl Fisher in District 1. Both candidates interviewed with NOLC's Executive Board.

Fisher has won endorsements from UFCW Local 555, Teamsters Joint Council No. 37, and the Oregon Education Association.

Finally, the labor council issued an early endorsement for Shirley Craddick, who has filed to run for re-election as a commissioner on the six-member, non-partisan Gresham City Council. Councilors are elected from the city at-large. The filing deadline is Aug. 21, with the election in November.

Dems anti-LNG resolution threat to labor unity

The Democratic Party of Clackamas County passed a resolution March 20 opposing the development of liquefied natural gas plants in Oregon.

The vote was 18 to 11, with most of the opposition coming from labor Democrats.

"This is a potentially very divisive wedge issue between environmental and labor camps in the party," said John Mohlis, executive secretary-treasurer of the Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council.

Construction and industrial unions, as well as the Oregon AFL-CIO, support construction of an LNG plant at Bradwood Landing east of Astoria because it will create family-wage jobs.

Mohlis told the NW Labor Press that at the meeting he asked proponents of the resolution to use coalitions other than the Democratic Party to oppose LNG plants.

"We saw what happened over the timber issue," he said. "A lot of timber workers voted Republican for a long time after that."

In a related matter, the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners voted 4-1 to approve land-use changes needed to build the LNG terminal at Bradwood Landing.

Commissioner Sam Patrick cast the only dissenting vote.

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