

Bend transit workers vote 27-0 to reject ‘cheap’ wage offer

By **MICHAEL FUNKE**
Special Correspondent

BEND — Bend Area Transit (BAT) workers, members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757, voted 27-0 April 20 to reject a “cheap” wage offer from Paratransit Services, the out-of-state contractor that runs this Central Oregon city’s public transit system.

Paratransit’s “best and final offer” of a \$1 an hour increase amounted to a three-year wage freeze, with no improvements in health insurance, vacations, or other benefits, union officials said.

BAT workers, who drive and dispatch fixed route and dial-a-ride buses, currently start at \$11 an hour and haven’t seen a pay raise in five years.

BAT workers average 45 percent less than unionized city employees in wages and benefits, and about 40 percent less than unionized school bus drivers employed by the Bend-LaPine School District.

Although the city is facing budget problems — and is proposing cuts in public transit service — it recently negotiated a 3 percent wage increase with city employees, and will raise the annual salary of Transit Manager Heather Ornelas by over \$5,400 to \$78,749.

Full-time BAT workers earn less than \$23,000 a year — and many of them rely on food stamps and other public assistance to take care of their families.

Paratransit’s meager wage offer came as over 60 public transit riders, BAT workers and union supporters rallied outside Bend City Hall against transit cuts and for workers’ rights.

Tom Chamberlain, president of the

...Ashbrook

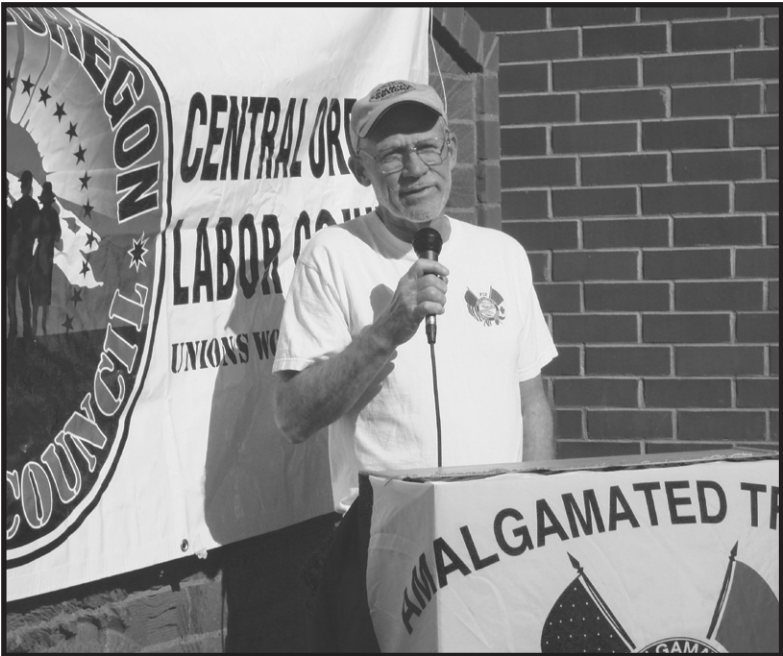
(From Page 12)

sively male can be a culture shock.

Ashbrook said the apprenticeship programs are mostly on board reaching out to women, so Oregon Tradeswomen may need to shift its focus to the contractors.

“One organization doing these things is not going to make enough difference,” Ashbrook said. “We need the industry to do more of this work themselves.”

Oregon Tradeswomen has outreach efforts to as many as 900 schools in Oregon, and runs an after-school program and a summer camp for girls. Six times a year, the group offers a free seven-week pre-apprenticeship class. Its biggest project is its annual Women in Trades Career Fair, which draws 1,500 girls and women to take part in workshops, meet with employers and recruiters, and find out what it takes to get into the trades. This year, the fair started May 1 and runs through May 3, at the NECA/IBEW Electrical Training Center, 16021 NE Airport Way, Portland.



ATU Local 757 member Bill Groesz, a shop steward at Bend Area Transit, speaks at a rally April 20 in Bend opposing cuts in public transit service.

Oregon AFL-CIO, recalled for the crowd a rally held last May when workers celebrated the formation of the union.

“I predicted back then that the Oregon labor movement would stand with you and that Paratransit would try to bully and demoralize workers rather than settle a contract,” he said. “But today, brothers and sisters, I predict a change is going to come. ATU will win a contract for BAT workers.”

The city needs to “get on the bus,” said ATU Local 757 President Jon Hunt, instead of cutting services and continuing the wage disparity while Paratransit ships Bend tax dollars to its Bremerton, Washington, headquarters. “Don’t cut services, take the money out of Paratransit’s profits,” Hunt said.

“We are really fighting these service cuts,” shop steward Bill Groesz said.

“But BAT workers have been living with cuts for a long time. They keep telling us to wait. The time to wait is over. Stop the cuts and raise the wages.”

BAT workers hope that Paratransit Services will return to bargaining soon. The union is prepared to take a strike vote if they refuse to bargain.

Local 757 members have joined BAT riders and supporters to fight the service cuts. Union members have also expressed support for a November ballot measure to create a new tax district to fund public transit. Paratransit Services will likely be terminated if a new transit district is approved by voters.

Bend’s Public Transit Advisory Committee will hold a public hearing on the service cuts from 2 to 3:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 7, at the Deschutes County Building, 1300 NW Wall Street, Bend.



THE MARCO CONSULTING GROUP

INVESTMENT CONSULTANTS TO
MULTI-EMPLOYER BENEFIT FUNDS

PLEASE CALL JASON ZENK AT 253-376-3391

MIDWEST OFFICE
550 W WASHINGTON BLVD
NINTH FLOOR
CHICAGO, IL 60661
P: 312-575-9000
F: 312-575-9840

EAST COAST OFFICE
1220 ADAMS ST
FIRST FLOOR
BOSTON, MA 02124
P: 617-298-0967
F: 617-298-0966

WWW.MARCOCONSULTING.COM

FREE

BARGAIN COUNTER

Free classified ads to subscribers

DEADLINE: Friday prior to publication
Published 1st and 3rd Fridays

Now accepting e-mails

Send to: Michael492@comcast.net
Mail to: NWLP, PO Box 13150, Portland OR 97213
(Please include union affiliation)

• 15-20 words • No commercial or business ads • 1 ad per issue

• Please print legibly • Sorry, we cannot accept ads over the phone

Ads **MUST** include area code *or they will not be published*

Automotive

‘95 CHEV 1/2 T. PICKUP, V6, auto, low miles, new tires, \$4,300; ‘78 Chev 3/4 T. pickup, V8, auto, 4wd, \$4,000. 503 625-6864

‘01 CHEV BLAZER, 4 dr, 4 wd, \$4,900. 541 401-1333

STOCK 6 BOLT Mag wheels and tires from 2002 Chev Tahoe P265/70R17, \$250. 360 694-7012.

‘03 FORD RANGER, 4wd, XLT, 5spd w/custom Gemtop, 4 extra studded tires, 44k, \$12,500. 503 695-5519

‘89 FORD ECONOLINE 350 cube van, doors, hood, grille, bumpers, \$10 each, you pull. 503 630-4177

adzes, leather tools, shaves, chests. 503-659-0009

For the Home

DOUBLE BED, maple complete w/box springs, mattress, sheets, pillows, pillow-cases and comforter, \$400. 503 632-6831

‘95 FRIDGIDAIR SXS refr/freezer, 25 cu.ft., ice, water indoor, almond, looks, works, great, \$250 OBO. 503 668-3334

Sporting Goods

LTR/1000 Trails campground membership, Oregon & Washington locations, \$1,950 OBO 503 252-1514

CAMPER, 11-foot Weekender, excellent, best offer, 503-232-3685

Housing

ROCKAWAY BEACH house, 3 bed, 2 bath, sleeps 9, great amenities, minutes to beach. 503 355-2136 or 503 709-6018

380 ACRES, FIELDS, pasture land, juniper trees, \$1000 per acre, terms. 541 468-2961

ROCKAWAY BEACH vacation home, 3 bed, sleeps 8, beachfront, all amenities, \$175/nite. 503 842-9607

FISH/HUNT 2 bed, 1 bath mobile home w/garage on Lake Rock Creek Reservoir, 112k. 541 544-2030

Wanted

CASH FOR old oil paintings. 503 653-1506

CROSS CUT log saws, slicks, double bit axes, blacksmith hammers, planes, wood-working hand tools. 503 819-3736

MILITARY COLLECTIBLES, uniforms, helmets, swords, flags, rifles, pistols, Etc. US, German or Japanese. 503 852-6791

JUNK CARS, removal of unwanted cars and pickups. 503 314 8600

MOTORCYCLES running or not and musical instruments. Cash paid. 503 880-8183

CASH FOR OLD woodworking tools, planes, levels, handsaws, chisels, slicks,

Industrial Distributor for Sale

Southern OR, Established, Profitable

Call Gerry Bendix, Broker,

Oregon Opportunities 530-242-0639

HEMORRHOIDS

The Non-Surgical Treatment

We specialize in the non-surgical treatment of hemorrhoids. For over 40 years people throughout the region have turned to the Sandy Blvd. Clinic for fast and effective relief. For more information, FREE consultation and/or a FREE informative booklet call:

Write or call for a FREE information booklet and/or a FREE consultation.

(503) 232-7609

THE SANDY BLVD. RECTAL CLINIC PORTLAND

Steven G. Cranford, DC, ND
FORMERLY THE BEAL-OLIVER CLINIC
CHIROPRACTIC/NATUROPATHIC PHYSICIANS
2026 NE SANDY BLVD., PORTLAND, OR 97232

Insurance accepted/pre authorization required.