

...CPBCTC 100 years old

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re-chartered twice. The first time was in 1938 with 20 affiliates; then again in 1973, with 21 affiliates. The Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council currently has 28 affiliated organizations representing approximately 20,000 members employed by more than 2,000 signatory employers.

Today ... "these members earn more in wages and benefits in an hour than most of those first 800 earned in one month," the centennial program noted.

"You folks built the middle class of America," said guest speaker Portland Mayor Tom Potter. "Our blue-collar, white-collar workers are the backbone of America. You're the strength. You're the people who pay the taxes. You're the people who do the heavy lifting. Thank you for that."

Potter said with baby boomers retiring, Oregon is about to experience a demographic change that is unprecedented in its history.

"It's important for our trade unions to be involved in that change," he said. "We need you to help train the next generation of workers."

Keynote speaker U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer thanked the building trades for its achievements over the past 100 years, then asked leaders to help him with crafting a plan for rebuilding America over the next century.

"We are facing an infrastructure crisis," he said. "We are spending less today (less than 1 percent of Gross Domestic Product) than at any other time in our history. We are losing the infrastructure race internationally."

Blumenauer said it was about this time 100 years ago that President Theodore Roosevelt met with his top political brass in Washington, D.C., to celebrate the progress of the United

States, but also to discuss problems the country was facing.

"By 1908, President Roosevelt had understood that we were kind of running out of gas; that we had some problems. He needed a new vision for his century," Blumenauer said. "It was out of that 1908 plan that we developed the large hydroelectric projects; the seeds were planted for an interstate highway system. He developed a vision for keeping our country moving forward for that century; one that you are celebrating this evening."

Blumenauer said it's now time for a new plan if the United States is going to survive this century. "We have an unprecedented challenge that faces us, to make sure that we get back on track, that we start investing in our infrastructure the way that the rest of the world is doing. And we need your help."

Because of the successes in the Portland metropolitan area, Blumenauer said the nation will be looking here for ideas.

"You have created a showpiece," Blumenauer said. "There is not a week that goes by when we don't have a delegation from somewhere around the world looking at the buildings, at the light rail, at the street cars, at the environmental protection; at the way that we have crafted the built-in environment in a way that enhances and enriches the quality of life, that stretches tax dollars, that has created jobs that aren't going to be exported overseas."

Said Mohlis: "We are proud of and grateful to the men and women who built this industry up for us over the past 100 years. I hope a century from now the men and women who are in the leadership positions we now hold will look back and be proud of the work that we have done."



(ABOVE) Wally Mehrens, Earl Kirkland and John Mohlis gather for a photo at the 100th anniversary party of the Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council. The three represent 42 years of leadership as executive secretary-treasurer of the Council, of which Mohlis currently holds the post. Kirkland also received a 60-year membership pin from his union, Heat and Frost Insulators Local 36. (LEFT) Calvin McKinnis, business manager of Plasterers Local 82, looks at anniversary program with Dave Ritchey, business manager of Laborers Local 335, and Laborers organizer Bill Hoffman.

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Oregon U.S. Congressman Earl Blumenauer thanked building trades craftsmen and women for their achievements over the last 100 years, and asked them to help him craft a new "infrastructure vision" for the next century.



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