

# Building trades unions say enough talk, build bridge now

Building trades union officials are scratching their heads over a resolution introduced May 27 at the regional Metro Council that, if passed, could scuttle a proposed \$4.2 billion Interstate 5 bridge project spanning the Columbia River.

Councilors Carlotta Collette, Robert Liberty and Carl Hosticka co-signed a resolution that calls for charging tolls on the current bridge between Portland and Vancouver, using the money to earthquake-proof the structure and to shore up on-ramps, and put off any decision on what to do with the bridge.

Liberty and Collette were re-elected by wide margins in the May primary. Hosticka ran unopposed.

The Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council and the Pacific NW Regional Council of Carpenters support a proposal that includes replacing the 91-year-old bridge with a new

one, and overhauling a five-mile stretch of I-5 from North Columbia Boulevard in Portland to State Route 500 in Vancouver. The new bridge would include a 12-lane highway, light rail, and lanes for bikes and pedestrians.

That option is the unofficial choice of a 39-member task force that has been studying how to relieve the Interstate Bridge traffic bottleneck. The task force — Columbia River Crossing (CRC) — was formed to make a recommendation to the Washington and Oregon transportation departments. It is composed of leaders from public agencies, businesses, labor, civic organizations, neighborhoods and freight, commuter and environmental groups from Oregon and Southwest Washington.

The task force has been meeting and holding public hearings regularly since early 2005. Over that time, it has



**The Interstate 5 Bridge between Portland and Vancouver is actually two bridges right next to each other. One carries northbound traffic and the other carries southbound, with three lanes in each direction. There is a vertical lift in the bridge to allow boat traffic to pass.**

cil No. 37. Lehrbach also sits on the TriMet board of directors.

The Metro Council is a 7-member body, so the three councilors need one more vote to pass their resolution. Union officials and members are lobbying Metro to replace the bridge.

Meanwhile, on May 2, a 5,000-page federal Draft Environmental Impact Statement outlining the five CRC alternatives was released. The public has 60 days — until July 1 — to comment. A coalition of 13 organizations that oppose a replacement bridge tried to get the public comment period extended an additional 60 days, but the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration denied the request.

At a public hearing May 29 in Vancouver, John Mohlis, executive secretary-treasurer of the CPBCTC, reiterated the trades' support of a replacement bridge. He also objected to earlier testimony suggesting that seismic upgrades to the current bridges were all that was needed. "I don't care how much lipstick you put on those bridges, they are still drawbridges on a major interstate highway. That's ludicrous in this day and age," he said.

At a hearing May 30 in Portland, Carpenters Union official Joe Baron said further delays will only make the project more expensive. "Build it big, and build it now," he said.

The eight public agencies will vote sometime this summer on which alternative they support. The CRC task force meets again on June 24.

## THE UNION PLUS® MORTGAGE PROGRAM

Provided Exclusively by Chase Home Finance



**When it comes to mortgages, we're taking a stand for Union members.**

Chase is backing union members with the Union Plus® Mortgage Program — a home purchase and refinancing program exclusively for union members, their parents and children.

- **FREE Mortgage Assistance Benefit**  
If you are unemployed or disabled.
- **A wide variety of mortgages**  
Choose from fixed rate, adjustable-rate, and low- or no-closing costs options.
- **Special Lending**  
First-time homebuyer and less-than-perfect credit programs.
- **Savings on closing costs**  
Member-only savings on new purchases and refinance.

It all adds up to more home-buying power.  
Contact your local Union Plus Mortgage Specialist

**Call Bob Krueger at: 503-490-0459**



Union Plus is a registered trademark of Union Privilege. Eligibility for mortgage assistance begins one year after closing on a Union Plus Mortgage through Chase Home Finance. This offer may not be combined with any other promotional offer or rebate, is not transferable, and is available to bona fide members of participating unions. For down payments of less than 20%, mortgage insurance (MI) is required and MI charges apply. All loans are subject to credit and property approval. Program terms and conditions are subject to change without notice. Not all products are available in all states or for all loan amounts. Other restrictions and limitations apply. ©2008 JP Morgan Chase & Co. All Rights Reserved. P-UP 104 2A-7604

boiled proposals down to five alternatives, including keeping the existing bridge (which is actually two bridges right next to each other) for northbound traffic and adding a supplemental bridge to carry southbound traffic; adding bus-only lanes instead of light rail, replacing the bridge, and doing nothing at all.

In January, an informal straw poll indicated a majority of the task force favored a replacement bridge. So do Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski and Washington Gov. Christine Gregoire.

Support is critical because before any option can move forward it must

win approval from eight public entities — the Oregon Department of Transportation, the Washington Department of Transportation, the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, TriMet, C-Tran, City of Portland, City of Vancouver, and Metro.

That's why the action of the three Metro councilors has upset union officials and others who have worked so hard to get to this stage.

"There's no reason Metro should be opposing this new bridge. It makes no sense," said Lynn Lehrbach, political director of Teamsters Joint Coun-

## SERVING UNIONS FOR OVER 25 YEARS



**QUALITY, AFFORDABLE FAMILY DENTAL CARE**

- ☺ General, cosmetic, and specialty care
- ☺ Most insurance and union plans accepted
- ☺ Easy credit and low monthly payments, O.A.C.
- ☺ Evening and Saturday appointments
- ☺ Ask about our **Confident**® Dental Discount Program

**BEAVERTON, OR**  
(503) 644-1400

**GRANTS PASS, OR**  
(541) 479-6696

**GRESHAM, OR**  
(503) 492-8487

**HILLSBORO, OR**  
**ORENCO STATION**  
(503) 640-9999

**MILWAUKIE, OR**  
(503) 659-2525

**PORTLAND, OR**  
(503) 777-0761

**SALEM, OR**  
(503) 362-8359

**WILSONVILLE, OR**  
(503) 682-8552  
Northwest Dental Associates, P.C.

**VANCOUVER, WA**  
**FISHER'S LANDING**  
(360) 891-1999  
Sarah Barber, D.D.S.  
Charles Stirewalt, D.D.S.  
Chau Ngo, D.D.S.

**VANCOUVER, WA**  
**SALMON CREEK**  
(360) 574-4574  
Phong Bui, D.M.D.  
Charles Stirewalt, D.D.S.  
Chau Ngo, D.D.S.  
Stirewalt, P.C.

**Protecting Union Member**  
**Smiles and Wallets.**  
**ORTHODONTICS AVAILABLE!**

**\$100 OFF**  
**NON COVERED**  
**DENTAL SERVICES**

There may be future costs based on diagnosis. Limit one per person. Not valid on diagnostic or preventative services. Not redeemable for cash or credit. Must surrender at time of service. Valid for cash, PPO, Indemnity patients only. Can't be combined, subject to change, expires 12/31/2008.

**1-888-BRIGHT NOW**

www.BRIGHTNOW.com



©2007 Bright Now! Dental, Inc.

**Bright Now! Dental**  
*Smiles for Everyone!*