

Oregon Residents:
The deadline to **Register to Vote**
is **Tuesday, Oct. 14**

...First contract at PDC creates brand new AFSCME Local 3769

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ployees as those around the table from PDC during these negotiations.”

At a PDC meeting Sept. 24, Board Chair Charles Wilhoite said he was proud to vote “yes” on the agreement.

“I’ve been on various boards and commissions over the years that have included collective bargaining agreements, and I’m pleased that this particular contract has seemingly brought us all closer together,” he said.

The contract, which is retroactive to July 1, 2007, runs through June 30, 2010. It provides workers cost-of-living increases of 3 percent dating back to July 1, 2007, plus an additional 3.7 percent retroactive to July 1, 2008. On July 1, 2009, employees will receive wage increases of between 2 and 5 percent, based on the consumer price index.

Prior to the union contract, PDC employees had not received cost-of-living raises in over five years, said AFSCME Council 75 representative James Hester. Hester was co-chair of the bargaining committee and will serve as staff rep to the new local.

Some other key elements of the agreement include:

- Formation of a Labor Management Committee to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest regarding the agency;
 - A formal process for grievances, complaints and arbitration that includes a third party;
 - Agreement that staff will begin paying 5 percent of their medical, dental and vision health benefits;
 - Union security language, which means workers must belong to the union to work there;
 - No strike, no lockout language.
- Board member John Mohlis, who is executive secretary-treasurer of the



Union member and PDC employee Art Hendricks (left) shakes hands with PDC Commissioner John Mohlis following PDC’s ratification of a first-ever union contract at the agency. Looking on is Local 3769 President Alan Stubbs.

Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council, said the contract “speaks volumes to what can be accomplished when labor and management come together in a respectful, collaborative process. This contract is good for employees, it’s good for PDC, and it’s good for taxpayers.”

PDC Executive Director Bruce Warner agreed. “Both management and labor have laid out a vision in this contract that works toward building a cooperative and collaborative work environment at all levels of the organization,” he said. “I believe this sets a very positive tone for PDC moving forward.”

It hasn’t always been so rosy. For years PDC operated with little public scrutiny. Its free spending drew the attention of the Portland City Club, which in 2005 released a scathing report questioning PDC’s lack of public accountability.

During the organizing campaign union officials discovered a workforce

fearful of management and in constant turmoil. Turnover was nearing 25 percent annually and workers had had enough.

Portland Mayor Tom Potter, who was elected in November 2004, vowed to make the agency “more transparent.” He brought in Warner, a former Oregon Department of Transportation director, and appointed a new commis-

sion. Shortly after the union organizing drive began, the Oregonian newspaper weighed in with an editorial railing against it. This led the Portland City Council to unanimously adopt a resolution supporting PDC staffers.

It took more than 16 months and 22 bargaining sessions to come to terms on a first contract.

“It’s not often that you go through contentious negotiations and come out with a better working relationship than you did going in,” Hester said. “But that’s what happened here.”

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Position 1

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