

# Contractor fined \$13,500 for crane mishap

OR-OSHA has fined Gray Purcell \$13,500 for three serious violations following a tower crane mishap in June in which a nonunion operator damaged a transmission line at Southeast 28th and Ankeny in Portland, knocking out power to about 8,000 residences and destroying the crane's electrical system.

The operator was shocked, but otherwise uninjured.

Gray Purcell is the general contractor on a four-story mixed use condo

project at the location.

OR-OSHA issued three "serious" citations: a \$5,000 fine for not having "properly trained" employees operating the tower crane; a \$5,000 fine for not properly instructing and supervising employees; and a \$3,500 fine for not maintaining the minimum distance from the 57 Kv power line.

OR-OSHA determined that the apprentice operator had less than one hour of seat time and was working the tower

crane near high-voltage lines with no visual supervision.

According to the OSHA citation, "The operator, approximately 93-feet below the cab on the ground and supervising the trainee, could not see the controls of the crane to ensure proper function by the trainee."

OR-OSHA requires that a crane operator have 1,500 hours of experience before running a crane solo.

Two days before the June 26 crane accident, Jim Anderson, a field representative for Operating Engineers Local 701, had been by to see how well

the crane was being run, and could tell the operator was inexperienced.

He spoke with the operator about the potential safety hazard posed by the nearby power lines.

Much of the work on the project is being done by nonunion subcontractors, including workers provided by LaborReady. Carpenters have picketed the site several times claiming that the employer doesn't pay area standard wages.

The OR-OSHA violations were issued Oct. 16. The employer has 30 days to appeal.

## SEIU's Stern on list for cabinet posts

Associated Press is reporting that Service Employees International Union President Andy Stern is on President-elect Barack Obama's short-list for secretary of labor.

Other names on the list include Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., chairman of House Education and Labor Committee, and former Rep. David Bonior, a member of Obama's Transition Economic Advisory Board.

Labor unions are in general agreement that anyone will be better than current Labor Secretary Elaine Chao.

Additionally, Oregon Congressman Earl Blumenauer's name has been mentioned for a possible appointment as secretary of transportation, while former Oregon governor John Kitzhaber is under consideration for Health and Human Services or Interior secretary.



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## Unions turn back right-to-work ballot measure in Colorado

DENVER — A right-to-work measure on the Colorado ballot was soundly defeated by voters on Election Day, 56 percent to 44 percent.

Measure 47 would have amended the state constitution by prohibiting unions from making membership a condition of employment (known as union shop, or closed shop). Under right-to-work laws an employee needn't join the union in order to enjoy the benefits of a union contract.

Proponents of the measure included a business coalition dubbed A Better Colorado, backed by Jonathan Coors of the Coors brewery family and the state chamber of commerce.

Shortly after the right-to-work initiative was certified by the state, labor unions countered with five initiatives of their own. The union initiatives dealt with regulating working conditions and employee benefits.

Not wanting to see a ballot box showdown between business and labor, Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter, a Democrat, intervened. He helped put together an alliance between major business leaders and the Denver Metro

Chamber of Commerce, which agreed to raise \$3 million and play an active role to defeat Measure 47 in exchange for labor pulling its initiatives from the ballot.

## DHL closure impacts Teamsters in Oregon; layoffs hurt other unions

One hundred members of Portland-based Teamsters Local 162 will lose their jobs when delivery company DHL Express discontinues its air and ground operations Jan. 30, 2009.

Approximately 9,500 U.S. jobs will be lost overall. This is on top of 5,400 layoffs since January. The company will retain 3,000 to 4,000 U.S. Express employees to handle international customers.

DHL is owned by Deutsche Post World Net. The closure announcement was made from Bonn, Germany.

Teamsters locals have already lost 15 workers at Archway-Mothers Cookies, and 74 workers at Gate Gourmet. Both companies shut down.

Communications Workers of America Local 7901 will lose nearly 100 members following job cuts at Qwest (50 workers) and US Dex (37 jobs).

## 'Holiday Party' Dec. 8 in Salem

SALEM — The 68th annual "Holiday Party for Children" will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 6, at the Elsinore Theatre, 170 High St. SE, Salem.

The free event, sponsored by the Marion, Polk, Yamhill Counties Labor Council, will feature holiday songs by Patrick Lamb, a showing of the movie King Fu Panda, a visit from Santa Claus, and a free goody bag. Lamb is a popular musician in Oregon and is a member of Musicians Local 99.

Doors open at 9:45 a.m.



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