

# Laborers apprenticeship program partners with Corvallis high schools

CORVALLIS — The Oregon/Southern Idaho Laborers Training Center in Corvallis has teamed up with the Corvallis School District and the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) to offer pre-apprenticeship training to high school students.

A media event was held April 3, after the first week of class was completed. Students will return for a second week of training May 18-22.

The students — 12 boys and four girls ranging from sophomores to seniors — get classroom instruction in construction topics, hands-on training as construction craft laborers, and an

introduction to how apprenticeship training works. Students spent a good portion of the week at the training center, while still having to complete their normal school assignments.

“I think the students were just blown away,” said Laborers Training Director Al DeVita. “They look at math in a different way now.”

Donna Keim, a career education assistant at Corvallis High School, is thrilled about the program. “Since we have gotten these kids involved with the Laborers program, I’ve seen excitement that just wasn’t there before,” she

said. “This program provides opportunities for students looking for a direction in their life.”

“I’m learning a lot and really enjoying the experience,” said Jennifer Green, one of the students enrolled in the program.

DeVita envisions the pre-apprenticeship program serving as a model for other pre-apprenticeship partnerships across the state. “This effort is all about being able to recruit a good stream of pre-trained, pre-qualified youth into our program, and training them as the workforce of Oregon’s future,” he said.

Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian agrees.

“Programs like this partnership help students to envision what they can do with their lives,” Avakian said. “This program is in line with our vision to link schools with training programs to provide employers with a workforce that will let Oregon compete in the global marketplace.”

The program is in the pilot stage, but the Laborers Training Center hopes to have it sanctioned as a BOLI-approved pre-apprenticeship program within the year.



AFSCME Oregon Council 75 Executive Director Ken Allen addresses delegates at the organization’s biennial convention, held April 24-26 in Salem.

## Oregon AFSCME convention wrestles with state fiscal crisis

SALEM — Delegates from around Oregon met April 24-26 at the Salem Convention Center for the biennial statewide convention of American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Oregon Council 75.

Oregon AFSCME President Gary Gillespie won re-election, outpolling challenger Tina Turner-Morfitt. First elected in 2001, Gillespie is a longtime member of (City of Eugene) Local 1724 and a clerk at the Eugene Public Library. Delegates also elected the other 14 members of the AFSCME Executive Committee as well as the full statewide Executive Board, which numbers about 75. The Executive Board meets quarterly and appoints the organization’s executive director, who hires and oversees staff. It also elects the Executive Committee, which meets monthly. All offices have two year terms.

AFSCME national President Gerald McEntee and Secretary Treasurer Bill Lucy were unable to attend, but Lee Saunders, executive assistant to McEntee gave the convention’s keynote ad-

dress. And Oregon AFSCME Executive Director Ken Allen gave delegates a “state of the union.”

Allen called AFSCME “a fightin’ union,” and credited members’ political volunteerism for its success.

“We beat back Bill Sizemore once again,” Allen said. “He was zero-for-five in the last election.”

Now, the biggest political challenge AFSCME members face is the Legislature’s response to the budget crisis. Allen called on lawmakers to increase the Oregon income tax on those making \$250,000 or more. On Day One of the convention, delegates headed to the Capitol to lobby their districts’ representatives.

“It makes no sense that our members who make \$10 per hour pay the same percentage that the Blazer players pay,” Allen said.

If additional revenues aren’t found, it’s almost certain that some AFSCME members will face layoffs. And for public employees to lose their jobs will only worsen the overall state economy, Allen said.

## Republic Windows worker to keynote at annual Jobs with Justice fundraising dinner

Portland Jobs with Justice will hold its 18th annual fundraising dinner May 16, 6 p.m. at the Portland Teamsters Union Hall, 1850 NE 162nd Ave.

Keynote speakers include Barbara Dudley, chair of the Oregon Working Families Party; and a union worker from Republic Windows and Doors. Republic is the Chicago factory that captured the nation’s imagination last fall when workers took over and refused to leave until their bankrupt employer and its bailed-out bank lender paid them wages they were owed.

Tickets are \$50 per person. Unions and other organizations can purchase tables for \$600. Proceeds benefit Portland Jobs with Justice, a labor-community coalition that campaigns for workers’ rights. Call 503-236-5573 to make reservations.

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