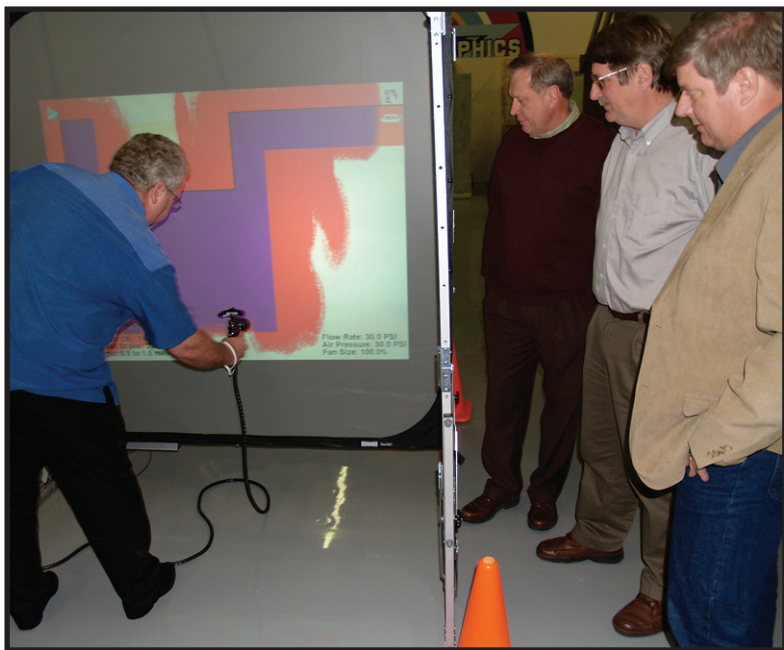


# Virtual reality system trains painters in Oregon and Southwest Washington



Kelly Humann (left) takes a test run in the virtual reality painter training booth at the Painters and Tapers Regional Apprenticeship Training Center in Northeast Portland. Watching in the photo below from left to right are Painters apprenticeship instructor Harry Kalin, Apprenticeship Coordinator Bill Regan, and International Union of Painters and Allied Trades Job Corps Program Field Coordinator Jim Purdy. Humann is an apprenticeship and training rep for the Finishing Trades Institute. The virtual reality paint training system is a computer simulation used for teaching proper spray painting techniques to apprentices and to help journeymen perfect their skills. The system gives painters immediate feedback on their transfer efficiency, paint consumption, overspray, and paint thickness — all without spending a dime on paint or respirators, while reducing hazardous waste and emissions. The training center purchased the simulator two months ago using a grant from Worksystems Inc. Clackamas. The technology was developed several years ago by the University of Northern Iowa in partnership with Iowa Waste Reduction Center and the Iowa Army National Guard for use in training workers to paint military vehicles. “This system cuts down on waste, and it shows our younger apprentices the hand-eye coordination needed in painting, and it lets our journeymen know where there is room for improvement,” Regan said. The virtual reality painting system will be set up at this year’s Women in Trades Career Fair May 16 at the IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.



# Champions of single payer health care meet in Portland

Mark Dudzic, national organizer for the Labor Campaign for Single Payer Healthcare, held a strategy session May 6 with a group of Portland union activists. The visit was part of a West Coast tour promoting labor support for the universal health coverage plan proposed by Rep. John Conyers of Detroit. Conyers’ bill, House Resolution 676, would expand Medicare — the government health insurance program for seniors — to cover all Americans.

The bill would be the most efficient route to guaranteed universal health care, because there would be just one, public, “single” payer for health services, not hundreds of private insurance companies with complicated billing procedures and exceptions. But it faces a political obstacle: HR 676 would eliminate private insurance companies from any significant role providing health insurance.

“The primary hurdle is that people believe it’s not politically possible,” Dudzic told the Northwest Labor Press. “The function of a labor campaign is to change that perception.”

Labor Campaign for Single Payer Healthcare was formed in January at a national conference in St. Louis attended by 150 trade unionists. Tom Leedham, president of Portland-headquartered Teamsters Local 206, is a member of the group’s national steering committee. Dudzic is a former New Jersey union president with the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers and long-time national organizer for the Labor Party — an effort to form a union-backed national political party.

Dudzic said HR 676 has strong support at the grass roots of the labor movement. So far, 20 international unions, 39 state labor federations, 127 central labor councils, and more than 400 local unions have passed symbolic resolutions supporting the bill. Since 2007, the national AFL-CIO has listed single payer as one option it would support. But many international union leaders in Washington, D.C., don’t see the bill as likely to pass, and in a meeting with AFL-CIO political staff, Democratic

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi reportedly confirmed that it will go nowhere. So leaders of organized labor are instead largely focusing their political efforts on making the best of other health care reform proposals, such as Obama’s campaign promise of a government health insurance plan offering that anyone could buy into. The AFL-CIO and several large unions have joined with other organizations to form Health Care for America Now, an umbrella group organized to support Obama’s campaign for a public insurance plan.

For its part, Labor Campaign for Single Payer Healthcare wants to make sure the “single payer” idea is at least on the table when Congress discusses health care reform this year. To achieve that, Dudzic said, single payer advocates will have to overcome Washington, D.C., group-think, which he called a “gigantic echo chamber of people telling each other what they can and can’t do.”

When Montana Sen. Max Baucus held a hearing May 4 on health care reform, no advocates for “single payer” were invited to testify, and Dudzic was one of eight single payer advocates who were arrested for standing up in the hearing room to demand “single payer” be considered.

HR 676 has 75 co-sponsors in the House, including Rep. Jim McDermott of Seattle.

## Public/private work relations LERA topic

The Oregon Chapter of the Labor and Employment Relations Association (LERA) is sponsoring a Public & Private Labor Employment Relations Conference from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, May 21, at the new University of Oregon-Portland branch, 70 NW Couch St. (the old White Stag building in Old Town.)

Registration is \$99 for members of LERA, \$120 for non-members and \$45 for students. Registration includes materials, continental breakfast, lunch, and break refreshments.

For more information, e-mail [OregonLERA@aol.com](mailto:OregonLERA@aol.com).

## Howard Dean will speak at JJ dinner

VANCOUVER — Howard Dean will be the keynote speaker at the Jefferson Jackson Dinner and Auction Friday, June 5, at the Clark County Fairgrounds.

The event, which is from 4:30 to 9 p.m., is a Democratic Party fundraiser hosted by the Clark County Democrats.

Tickets are \$65 if purchased before June 1, and \$75 after that.

For more information, call Paul Stuckenschneider at 503 860-7004 or email him at [plstuck@tds.net](mailto:plstuck@tds.net).



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