

SEIU's Stern leads White House visitor list

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — Service Employees President Andrew Stern leads a long list of heavy hitters who visited the White House in the first part of this year to talk issues with President Barack Obama and his top aides.

Stern visited the White House on 22 occasions from Jan. 20 through July 31.

For all those on the list, the visits included public ceremonies, such as when Obama had many union leaders over to the White House and declared that

“unions are part of the solution” to U.S. economic ills — and private meetings.

SEIU said in a statement that Stern’s visits covered health care and the stimulus law.

“Coming off an eight-year period when the voice of workers fell on deaf ears, the list demonstrates the White House desire to hear from working people,” SEIU said.

Trailing Stern on the 500-visitor list were Obama transition team director John Podesta (17 visits) and National

Organization for Women President Kim Gandy (15). Richard Trumka, then the AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer and now its president, visited seven times.

Big Business was not shut out of the White House. Corporate visitors included Bill Gates, the co-founder of Microsoft, and CEOs Lloyd Blankfein of Goldman Sachs, Vikram Pandit of Citigroup, Jamie Dimon of JPMorgan Chase, Rex Tillerson of the ExxonMobil, David O’Reilly of Chevron and Jeffrey Immelt of GE.

LCSA's Yule party slated for Dec. 19

Labor’s Community Service Agency will hold its 13th annual “Presents from Partners” holiday toy drive. The annual event culminates in a toy distribution party for underprivileged children.

To participate, drop off a new, unwrapped toy to the Northwest Oregon Labor Council or Labor’s Community Service Agency between now and Dec. 17. The offices are located at 1125 SE Madison St., Portland.

The Presents from Partners Holiday Toy Party will be held on Saturday, Dec. 19, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Genesis Community Fellowship, 5425 NE 27th (27th & Killingsworth), Portland.

Geek Squad election withdrawn

Hopes that local Geek Squad workers might unionize will have to wait. Members of a unit of 24 home theater installers working at Oregon and Southwest Washington Best Buy stores signed cards seeking to join International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 48. Local 48 petitioned the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) Sept. 8 to hold an election, and the federal agency scheduled one Nov. 5. They would have been the first Best Buy workers in America to unionize.

But the day before the election, the union withdrew the petition.

Local 48 organizer Terry Reigle said Best Buy anti-union maneuvers diluted union support and made the outcome too close for comfort. Attorneys for the company persuaded the NLRB that a group of 13 computer techs — workers who had not sought out the union — should be included in the proposed bargaining unit. And weekly mandatory-attendance anti-union meetings held as late as Nov. 3 succeeded in creating doubts among some union supporters.

Reigle said pro-union Geek Squad workers were supportive of the decision to pull the petition.

IN MEMORIAM

FLOYD EARLS, a retired financial secretary of Exterior and Interior Specialists Local 2154 and business agent of the defunct Oregon State District Council of Carpenters, died Oct. 29 at age 85.

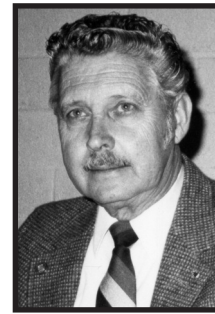
Earls retired in 1989 after a career that began when he joined a United Brotherhood of Carpenters local in 1953 in San Bernardino, California.

He moved to the Portland area in 1954.

Floyd William Earls was born on June 29, 1924, in Spur, Texas, which is west of Lubbock. He grew up in the Riverside area, near San Bernardino, CA. He attended high school in nearby Redlands. He served in the Civilian Conservation Corps in Southern California and later worked for the U.S. Forest Service.

Earls joined the U.S. Army in 1942 and served in the Combat Engineers in Europe in World War II.

Earls joined Carpenters Local 1020, which was mostly a shipwrights local. However, he worked as an installer of Sheetrock. Later, he and other Sheetrockers joined Carpenters Local



2154, eventually renaming it Exterior and Interior Specialists Local 2154.

Earls was elected as one of the business agents of the Portland District Council of Carpenters in 1979, but still retained his post with Local 2154. When the Oregon State District Council of Carpenters was formed, it

took over the Portland District and Earls became a business agent of the State Council (the state council is now the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters).

Earls served as a trustee of the Oregon Carpenters Health & Welfare and Pension Trust Funds and chaired the Carpenters Apprenticeship and Training Committee.

He was installed into the Northwest Oregon Labor Council Retirees Labor Hall of Fame in November 2006.

Floyd was preceded in death in 2007 by his wife Irene. They were married 57 years.

He is survived by a son, Floyd Jr., who is a member of Local 2154; a daughter, Jan Troxler; plus three grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

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