

Open Forum

Nesbitt to be governor's chief of staff

SALEM — Tim Nesbitt, a former president of the Oregon AFL-CIO and current deputy chief of staff to Gov. Ted Kulongoski, will be promoted to chief of staff effective June 18. Nesbitt will succeed Chip Terhune, who has accepted the position of director of environmental and public affairs at Schnitzer Steel Industries, Inc.



TIM NESBITT

"Tim has successfully developed and managed many policy and legislative issues on which I place a high priority," said Kulongoski, who is term limited in 2010. "His knowledge and passion for public policy are invaluable and I am pleased he has accepted this new role."

Nesbitt has served as the governor's deputy chief of staff for health care, education and workforce development, land use, revenue, and public safety since December 2006.

Nesbitt was president of the Oregon AFL-CIO from 1999 to 2005. He left mid-term. Kulongoski hired him as an adviser to his re-election campaign in July 2006 and to his staff after winning re-election in November.

No surprise that big business celebrated comp reform

To The Editor:

I read with great interest your recent story on the 20 year anniversary of the Mahonia Hall task force (NW Labor Press, May 7, 2010) and our effort to reform the Oregon workers' compensation system.

I was the Teamster representative on the committee and one who, along with others unnamed in your article, opposed the final product. Those of us who stood in opposition were right to do so. The so-called reform shifted a large measure of responsibility for workplace injuries from employers to workers.

Gov. Ted Kulongoski touts the \$17.5 billion saved by employers, but where did that savings come from? Could it have anything to do with the increase in

challenged and denied claims, pressuring workers to return to work before they've recovered, making it more difficult for attorney's representing injured workers to practice, or perhaps putting the burden of proof on workers to prove their carpal tunnel injury was caused by years of scanning groceries and not their annual fly-fishing trip?

State Rep. Brad Witt said it accurately: "workers got screwed."

It's no surprise that big business still "celebrates" their victory 20 years later, but what about working people? I suspect there were just as many injured workers attending the "celebration" as were quoted for the article ... zero.

Tom Leedham
Teamsters Local 206
Portland

Retirees must have voices heard

To The Editor:

The Alliance for Retired Americans had its annual convention last month in Las Vegas. The event usually takes place in Washington, D.C., and is a legislative conference, which allows us to spend some time with our elected officials to talk about the issues near and dear to us. Health care for all, pension security, and Social Security remains at the top of our agenda.

This year, most of our time was spent in workshops that provided us information that we can use to move our agenda. One important item that was discussed was President Obama's executive order creating the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform. The 18-person commission is charged with finding ways to reduce the national deficit. Several members of the commission are known foes

of Social Security and Medicare, so we know those programs will be targets.

Since most states have ARA chapters, it also was a time for us activist retirees (this year, 396 retirees attended) to share our stories about how we get our voices heard by other senior citizens, as well as by lawmakers.

ARA is made up of mostly union retirees, as the organization is affiliated with the AFL-CIO. Our group is very aware that retirees make up the largest voting bloc in the United States. Our goal is to keep these retired union members informed of the issues that impact them, their children, and their grandchildren, and to make sure they get to the polls on Election Day.

Verna Porter
First Vice President
Oregon Alliance for
Retired Americans

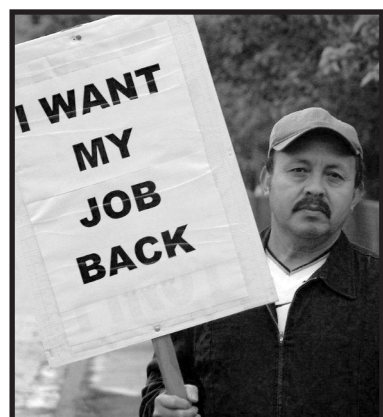
Laborers take BrucePac dispute to next stage

Laborers Local 296 is getting ready to take its BrucePac campaign to the next stage.

Nonunion BrucePac — a custom cooked meat processor with plants in Silverton and Woodburn — Oregon, fired 17 union supporters in a 42-worker mass layoff last June, just weeks after a union campaign had begun.

In April, federal Administrative Law Judge Lana Parke found the evidence persuasive enough in three of the firings to conclude that BrucePac terminated the workers because they were union supporters, in violation of federal labor law. Parke ordered the three reinstated with backpay, but the company has not yet done so. BrucePac attorneys requested and received an extension to May 27 to prepare an appeal of the judge's decision to the National Labor Relations Board in Washington, D.C.

Now Local 296 is taking the campaign to BrucePac customers. BrucePac



Fired BrucePac employee Manuel Coria protests at the Silverton plant May 17.

doesn't sell directly to the public, but instead cooks and packages meat and poultry according to the recipes and specifications of its customers.

On May 6, Business Representative Jack Roy sent a letter to Figaro's Pizza,

Taco Del Mar, Taco Bell, Costco, and Winco asking them to reconsider using BrucePac products.

The letter points out that the union campaign was initiated by the workers, "who came to the union and complained about oppressive working conditions, harassment by supervisors, low wages and lack of benefits."

Local 296 will begin publicizing its dispute with BrucePac, the letter warns.

"The public will be advised of the illegal conduct of BrucePac, and will be advised that your company is a customer of BrucePac and uses its products."

Local 296 dispatcher Dagoberto Aranda said the union is not yet calling for a boycott of the BrucePac customers, but will encourage union supporters to contact the companies. As for BrucePac, the union is asking only that it obey the law, and comply with the judge's order.

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