

Stimulus funds will help Portland schools with 'green' retrofits

UA Local 290 works with Sen. Wyden, City of Portland to make it happen

The Portland City Council on May 25 approved sub-allocating \$11 million in federal stimulus bonds to Portland Public Schools (PPS) for energy and water conservation projects that should create some jobs in the building trades.

The Recovery Zone Economic Development Bonds will finance the costs of energy and water conservation projects across 95 Portland schools.

"This is a win-win for the City and

for PPS because we can issue these bonds to fund projects that reduce our energy and water use, put people to work this summer, and repay the bonds with the cost savings," said David Wynde, chair of the school board finance committee.

"This will greatly help put our members back to work," said John Endicott, business manager of Plumbers and Fitters Local 290 in testimony before the City Council.

Endicott said that for the most part, federal stimulus money hasn't reached construction workers in Oregon. "A hundred of our 450 apprentices have been out of work for over a year," he said. "It's difficult to sustain your trade when you can't continue to train replacement workers that we will need in the future."

John Mohlis, executive secretary-treasurer of the Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council, told city commissioners that not only is unemployment among the crafts hovering around 30 percent, but underemployment is around 65 percent.

"This is a great idea," he said of the development bonds. "We need to do more of it."

The City of Portland received \$33.9 million in Recovery Zone bonding authority under the American Recovery

and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), including \$13,548,000 in Recovery Zone Economic Development (RZED) bonds. Recovery Zone Economic Development bonds are taxable municipal bonds that are eligible for a 45 percent direct interest payment subsidy from the federal government.

Endicott told the Labor Press that he talked to U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden several months ago about using stimulus funds to retrofit outdated boilers and water

pipes at public schools.

"The next day he was on the phone to the mayor (Sam Adams) and the school district," Endicott said. "He told me 'this is going to work, I'm going to make it work,'" Endicott said.

The City jumped on board and, after evaluating three responses, selected the Portland School District.

"This is such a make-sense idea," Endicott told the city council. "You've got boilers over 60 years old. Some

came off Liberty ships they dismantled after World War II, if you can imagine that. They're very energy inefficient and polluting. So, we get the polluters out, we save a lot of dollars in utility costs for the school district, and we put family wage people to work on those jobs."

Portland Public Schools will carry the bonding liability on the loan. The sub-allocation has no impact on the City's budget or to taxpayers.

U.S. Labor Department launches interactive web site on rights and responsibilities in union officer elections

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of Labor unveiled a new interactive web site, or Union Elections Advisor, to help millions of union members, union officers, union election committees and candidates in union elections better understand their rights and responsibilities under the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA).

The site is <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/unionelections.htm>.

The Labor Department's Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) administers and enforces most provisions of the LMRDA.

"This site is a very valuable tool for union election committee members, election observers, candidates, members, officers and union staff," said Dr. John Lund, OLMS director. "It provides straight answers and practical ex-

amples on each step of union officer election procedures."

Elaws advisors are free, web-based tools designed to help workers and employers understand the major laws administered and enforced by the department. By asking a series of questions, the advisors simulate a conversation with a Department of Labor expert and guide users to customized information explaining the requirements of each law.

For example, users are presented with menu options and can access information on various topics. After a user responds to questions regarding the type of union and the purpose of the election in which the user is interested, the OLMS Union Elections Advisor will then:

- Determine whether the LMRDA covers the union officer election;

- Help union members and election officials understand their roles and responsibilities in conducting union officer elections;

- Summarize the requirements and procedures for planning and conducting union officer elections;

- Help candidates and union members understand their rights through the election process; and

- Outline the timetable and requirements for protesting an election.

The department offers more than 30 elaws advisors covering a wide range of employment law topics, such as minimum wage and overtime, child labor, veterans' workplace rights, health and retirement benefits, and workplace safety and health.

For more information, go to <http://www.dol.gov/elaws>.

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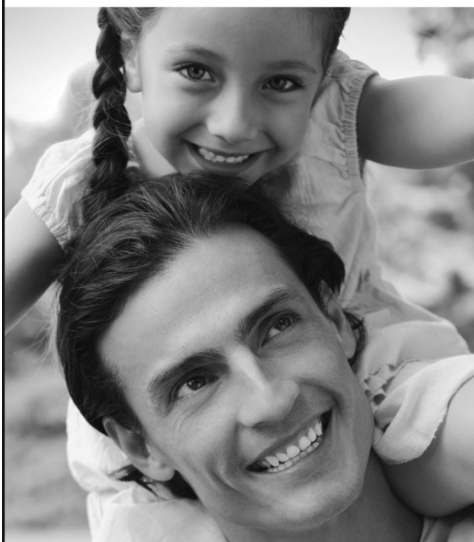
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