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Happy Fourth of July!

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Members of Oregon AFSCME Council 75 stand behind a mound of trash they picked up June 18 — a state-mandated unpaid furlough day for state employees.

AFSCME crew spends furlough day cleaning up river trash

For some public sector union members, a furlough day is a chance to serve the public another way. Facing a severe revenue shortfall, Oregon's state agencies have declared "furlough" days, shutting offices and sending workers home under strict orders not to work. But nothing prevents unions from rallying members for community service projects. Thus far, members of Oregon AFSCME have used furlough days to plant native plants in Tualatin, assemble science kits for a Portland after-school group, remove invasive plants along Rinearson Creek in Gladstone, and prepare food at a Eugene soup kitchen.

On June 18, about a dozen AFSCME members used a furlough day to partner with Willamette Riverkeepers fishing trash out of the river at Cathedral Park under the St. Johns Bridge in Portland.

"A group of us wanted to be able to continue to provide public service on the days we're not getting paid to provide public service," said Karen Williams, (pictured center right holding a bottle full of hypodermic needles), water quality analyst and union steward at AFSCME Local 3336. "We understand that we are part of the solution for balancing the state's budget, but we hope people make the connection that a loss in revenue equates to a loss in service."

As many as 14 furlough days have been scheduled between September 2009 and June 2011.



Heintzman tapped as president of ATU international union

Ron Heintzman, a former president of Portland-based Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 757, has been appointed international president by the ATU's General Executive Board following the retirement of Warren S. George, effective July 1.

Heintzman, 57, becomes the eighth international president in the ATU's 117-year history. He will serve the remainder of George's term, which expires in September.

Heintzman has served as international executive vice president for the past year, and prior to that served seven years as an international vice president. As executive vice president he was responsible for directing the activities of 18 international vice presidents and four international representatives in Canada and the United States.

Additionally, Heintzman was responsible for overseeing the organizing and strategic planning departments.

During the past year, more than 1,000 newly organized members joined ATU.

As an international vice president, Heintzman assisted locals in organizing and negotiating collective bargaining agreements in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Colorado, Nevada and Texas.

Heintzman served five terms as president of Portland-based Local 757. First elected in 1988, he was president of the local when he was appointed as international vice president in 2002. During his tenure at Local 757, the union more than doubled in size, growing to over 5,000 members with 23 separate collective bargaining agreements in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Heintzman's early background was in criminal justice. He spent most of his childhood in North Dakota, but finished high school in Seattle. He graduated from Washington State University in

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Trained home energy workers waiting for jobs

By DON McINTOSH
Associate Editor

Home energy efficiency is said to be growing rapidly, and yet nearly a year into a much-watched Portland pilot project, fewer than a dozen union-trained workers have found "green jobs" weatherizing homes.

Despite that, the program — Clean Energy Works Portland — is being looked at as a model, says State Rep. Jules Bailey (D-Portland). Bailey is overseeing a statewide expansion of the program. And backers in the U.S. Senate seek to expand it nationwide.

Two characteristics of Clean Energy Works Portland are getting praise: an "on-bill" financing mechanism that eliminates upfront costs for homeowners, and rules to ensure workers earn a living wage doing the retrofits. In Clean Energy Works Portland, homeowners get insulation and high-efficiency fur-

naces and hot water heaters, and pay for the improvements out of the savings on their utility bills. Meanwhile, young women, minorities, and ex-cons get "pathways out of poverty," earning a living wage after learning weatherization and basic construction skills in union training centers. Contracts to do the work go mostly to women-owned and minority-owned businesses.

So far, though, the results haven't kept pace with the promises. When the program was launched July 8, 2009, it aimed to retrofit 500 Portland homes in the first year. As of June 25, 107 homes had been retrofitted. Work is ready to start on 53 more; 260 are somewhere between turning in an application and signing the loan papers; and a final 100 will be recruited this summer using a different method.

"Expectations have been so high, but

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