

...Laborers scale back home weatherization training for lack of jobs

(From Page 1)

big structural changes take time," said Clean Energy Works Portland Director Andria Jacob. Jacob said it took longer than expected to work out the program's financing; the 500 retrofits are now expected to be completed by the end of 2010.

Six months' delay might not matter, except that unions were rushed to train

workers who have now waited as long as seven months without employment. They are mostly young women and minority workers new to construction, and were recruited by minority pre-apprenticeship programs with talk of steady work at a living wage.

"Last year they said, 'You need to do a training program by the end of October, because the beginning of November they're going to be hiring people,'" said Al DeVita, director of the Oregon Laborers Training Center. "Nobody got hired by the first of the year, and we had already finished two classes by the time one person got hired."

Forty-six workers have now gone

through the training at the Laborers' facility near Corvallis. Just six of them have been hired by Clean Energy Works Portland contractors — even though participating contractors are required to hire all new workers from training programs the program designates.

To get the designation, training centers must partner with at least three women or minority pre-apprenticeship programs, and ensure that a majority of

its trainees are women, people of color, residents of low-income communities or other disadvantaged people. The Laborers' weatherization program was the first to get that designation, on Feb. 8. A similar program offered by the Pacific Northwest Carpenters Institute was the second, three days later.

The Carpenters' three-week training program has had similar results: 24 workers trained, with only a handful employed. Mt. Hood Community College is looking to enter the program as a third designated training facility.

When Clean Energy Works Portland was being developed, Laborers and Carpenters union representatives were enthusiastic partners. They spent months in stakeholder meetings craft-



EcoTech employee Avery Pelote puts an insulation-blowing hose into a hole drilled into an uninsulated cavity in a Northeast Portland home. Pelote, 20, was recruited by Portland Youth Builders to take part in a new four-week weatherization training program offered by the Laborers Oregon Training Center, and is one of the first program graduates to find employment in the field.

ing a community workforce agreement that sets a wage and benefit floor for workers (currently \$15 an hour), and enables a union foothold in a market that's said to be on the cusp of rapid expansion.

Under the agreement, contractors must stay neutral if workers seek to

unionize, and must recognize a union if a majority of their workers want to join one. But no contractor has been unionized in this way yet. Instead union organizers are trying to persuade contractors to sign union agreements, selling them on the value of skilled union workers, an economical benefit pack-

age, and ready access to workers — when they need them — through the union hiring hall. None of the 12 Clean Energy Works Portland contractors have signed on so far.

An exception to that is the pilot project's final "neighborhood" phase — a bright spot from the union standpoint. While the first 400 homeowners come from throughout the city, the final 100 will come from the Cully neighborhood in Northeast Portland. Clean Energy Works Portland is paying the faith-labor-community group Metropolitan Alliance for Common Good (MACG) \$20,000 to recruit in that neighborhood. For those 100 homes, the subcontractors doing the HVAC, plumbing, and electrical work of installing furnaces and water heaters will be signatory to Sheet Metal Workers Local 16, Plumbers and Fitters Local 290, and Electrical Workers Local 48. And the weatherization work itself will be done by six contractors that have signed the equivalent of a project labor agreement with the Laborers: EcoTech, Chick of All Trades, Sustainable Solutions Unlimited, Faison Construction, Balanced Energy Solutions, and Abacus Energy Solutions. Their workers will receive the Laborers' newly-set residential weatherization union scale when they are retrofitting the 100 houses in the Cully neighborhood: \$16 an hour, plus \$4.45 an hour in benefits. They'll also be Laborers union members temporarily — for the duration of the work.

To partner with Clean Energy Works Portland, the two unions had to change the way they normally work. Ordinarily, union training centers train only union apprentices, and trainees then find union employment or are dispatched to union-signatory contractors by a union hall. But in this case, the training centers — with funding from union workers and contractors — are training workers who are not union members, and who are then hired by nonunion contractors.

"We agreed with the City to make a good faith effort to supply all these non-union employers with people from qualified training programs," DeVita

(Turn to Page 12)



(International Standard Serial Number 0894-444X)
Established in 1900 at Portland, Oregon as a voice of the labor movement.

4275 NE Halsey St., P.O. Box 13150, Portland, Ore. 97213
Telephone: (503) 288-3311

Editor: Michael Gutwig
Staff: Don McIntosh, Cheri Rice

Published on a semi-monthly basis on the first and third Fridays of each month by the Oregon Labor Press Publishing Co. Inc., a non-profit corporation owned by 20 unions and councils including the Oregon AFL-CIO. Serving more than 120 union organizations in Oregon and SW Washington. Subscriptions \$13.75 per year for union members.

Group rates available to trade union organizations.
PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT PORTLAND, OREGON.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS NOTICE: Three weeks are required for a change of address. When ordering a change, please give your old and new addresses and the name and number of your local union.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS, P.O. BOX 13150, PORTLAND, OR 97213-0150

Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters, Elevators, Plasterers, Family

IBEW & UNITED WORKERS FCU
PROUDLY SERVING UNION MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES SINCE 1954.

Didn't win the Harley at the Unions for Kids Poker Run?

Don't wait until next year for another chance to get a Harley!

Get your motorcycle today with financing from IBEW & United Workers FCU.

Rates as low as 6.49%*
+
Easy Application Process
= **Member Satisfaction**

IBEW AND UNITED WORKERS FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

9955 SE Washington Street
Portland, OR 97216

(503) 253-8193 * (800) 356-6507
www.ibewuwfcu.com

*Includes .50% reduction of rate with automatic payment from IBEW & United Workers FCU account. Rates based on credit qualifications.

Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters, Elevators, Plasterers, Family