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Oregon bucks national trend, re-elects Democrats to Congress

Labor has more mixed record in local races

Oregon voters bucked the national trend of a Republican "tsunami" in the midterm elections, re-electing Democrat Ron Wyden to the U.S. Senate and Democrats Earl Blumenauer, David Wu, Kurt Schrader and Peter DeFazio to the House of Representatives. All were endorsed by organized labor.

The race for Oregon governor between labor-backed Democrat John Kitzhaber and Republican Chris Dudley was undecided at press time. With 86 percent of the votes counted, Dudley held 49 percent of the vote to Kitzhaber's 48 percent.

In the only other statewide race, Democrat Ted Wheeler was elected state treasurer, defeating Republican Chris Telfer by a 52-43 percent margin.

Nationally, Democrats remained in control of the U.S. Senate. At press time, the makeup was 51 Democrats to 46 Republicans, with three races still undecided. One of those undecided races was in Washington, where Patty Murray was holding a slim lead over Dino Rossi.

At press time it was also projected that Republicans would pick up at least 60 seats in the U.S. House — the largest swing since 1948, according to CNN.

The Republican leadership — as part of its "Pledge to America" — has vowed to oppose additional spending to stimulate the economy. That's bad news for construction workers because President Obama had a plan to spend \$50 billion on roads, railways and airports. Republicans also say they will repeal Obama's health care reform law and are likely to try to rebuff extending unemployment insurance benefits to some 6 million long-term unemployed and scale back the overhaul of financial regulation that the outgoing Democratic Congress passed last summer. One thing Obama might succeed at would be passing the Korean Free Trade Agreement, which he supports, much to organized labor's chagrin.

Speaking to union activists and volunteers on election night, Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain called the Oregon campaign "a long slog" that began in January when voters approved ballot measures requiring the wealthy and corporations to pay their fair share of taxes.

"The backlash has been that they've

poured millions of dollars trying to buy an election," Chamberlain said.

Chamberlain said Oregon AFL-CIO efforts were responsible for 35,000 telephone calls, 65,000 door knocks, and 20,000 leaflets distributed. And as of Election Day, Chamberlain said, voter turnout among Oregon union members was 7 percentage points higher than the general public.

Among a roster of Oregon "labor legislators" re-elected to office were House incumbents Jeff Barker (former officer in the Portland Police Association); Michael Dembrow (long-time vice president of American Federation of Teachers); Paul Holvey (business rep for the Carpenters); Brad Witt (business rep for United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555); Greg Matthews (a member of Gresham Fire Fighters); and Mike Schaufler (a former member of the Laborers Union).

Newcomers Claudia Kyle of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48, and Doug Ainge of the Oregon Education Association lost their House races.

At press time, the Oregon House was evenly split at 28-28, with four races still undecided. Democrats controlled the Oregon House last session 36-24.

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Joe Peizner of AFSCME Local 328 reacts to early election returns at Hilton Hotel, where supporters of Democratic gubernatorial candidate John Kitzhaber gathered on Election Day. The race had not been decided before this issue of the Labor Press went to press.

Intel to spend billions on new fab plant in Hillsboro

With it comes the promise of thousands of construction jobs

Microchip giant Intel's announcement Oct. 19 that it will build a brand new development fabrication (fab) plant at its Ronler Acres Campus in Hillsboro was music to the ears of construction union officials.

Intel, headquartered in Santa Clara, California, will spend nearly \$4 billion building D1X — a 1.8 million-square-foot facility that will develop its next-generation 22-nanometer microprocessors. It also will upgrade its two existing fabs, D1C and D1D.

Intel officials said upwards of 6,000 construction jobs will be created by the projects.

Hoffman Construction will be the

general contractor.

"This couldn't have arrived at a better time. Thank you Intel," said John Mohlis, executive secretary of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council (OSBCTC). Mohlis and numerous other union officials attended the press conference, along with Gov. Ted Kulongoski, U.S. Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, and Congressman David Wu.

With unemployment in the trades exceeding 20 percent, union officials said they have the manpower willing, ready, and able to go to work. And though there is no guarantee that the work will be union, signatory contractors, for the most part, have built Ronler Acres Campus from the ground up starting in 1994.

Paul Riggs, executive secretary of the Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council, worked



At its peak, Intel's 778,000-square-foot D1D fab employed 4,000 union construction workers. The new D1X will be twice as big. Photo by Bruce Forster Photography, Inc.

at Intel for many years starting in the mid-1990s as a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48.

"They told us then that they were making a long-term investment here," he said. "They're making good on their word."

At the Oct. 19 press conference, Jill Eiland, Oregon public affairs manager at Intel, pointed to Mohlis and the other union officials as she praised the union crafts for their past work, and said Intel was glad to be able to put some of its friends in the building trades back to work.

All crafts will see jobs from the projects, though fitters and electricians will benefit the most.

"We certainly appreciate Intel's investment in Oregon," Mohlis said. "There's a reason Intel chose to put a

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