

At the Oregon Legislature

Union leaders will lobby on behalf of working people

By **DON McINTOSH**
Associate Editor

SALEM — Oregon's citizen legislature convenes Feb. 1. The five-month session will be dominated by debates on how to deal with a severe state revenue shortfall. To make sure lawmakers remember working people when decisions are made, representatives of Oregon's labor union movement will be frequent visitors in the Capitol.

For the Oregon AFL-CIO, the number one legislative priority will be supporting good jobs, said spokesperson Elana Guiney — whether that means maintaining public services and public sector jobs, attracting manufacturing, or making additional public investments in construction or infrastructure.

The AFL-CIO won't be pushing bills to expand labor rights this year, Guiney said, because it would be difficult given the makeup of the House to get anything through. Republicans gained seats in the Oregon House in the November 2010 election, and the chamber is now split 30-30 between the two parties. The governorship and the Oregon Senate remain in Democratic hands.

Guiney mentioned two job-related bills the federation will support.

New officers elected at Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Central Labor Council

KALAMA — New officers have been elected to the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Counties Labor Council. They are: President Jeff Washburn of Plumbers and Fitters Local 26; Vice President Tim Pfeifer of Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers Local 580; Recording Secretary-Treasurer David Myers of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 970; Sergeant-at-Arms Steve Swarat of Service Employees International Union Local 925; and Trustee Linda Hart of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555. Hart will join Lowell Lovgren of AWPPW Local 633 and Dale Barto of Machinists Lodge W536 as trustees. The latter two were not up for election.



One would require that whenever prime industrial land is converted to another use, other industrial land be found to replace it. Keizer Station, near Salem, is an example of the problem: A parcel of land there had been reserved for industrial use, but instead was developed as a shopping center. [So instead of being a site for high-wage manufacturing, it's become an opportunity for big-box chains to employ low-wage workers to sell foreign-made goods.]

The other bill would allow developers of gas, water, and electric transmission lines to get a conditional permit before obtaining permission from landowners. Current rules bog down the permitting process, Guiney said.

Another bill that may get labor support is HB 2033, a bill Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian will be pushing to restore career and technical education to Oregon middle schools and high schools. It would expose students at up to 10 schools to high-de-

mand jobs in renewable energy, health care, and manufacturing.

United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 555 will continue its legislative campaign to protect members from draconian penalties for unwitting sales of alcohol to minors. Last session, the union was able to win a law decriminalizing such sales (making it a civil, not criminal offense). But Local 555 Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Anderson said the Oregon Liquor Control Commission is undermining the intent

of the decriminalization by targeting cashiers with felony "furnishing alcohol to a minor" charges — even though that statute is aimed at intentional "shoulder-tap" type activity.

And State Rep. Brad Witt (D-Clatskanie), who is also a Local 555 union rep, is expected to propose a ban on alcohol and tobacco sales at self-checkout stations.

Oregon Working Families Party — a minor political party that has union support — will work to pass a bill creating a state bank. The idea — modeled on the Bank of North Dakota — is to take the billions of dollars the State of Oregon now deposits mostly in large out-of-state banks, and deposit the funds instead in a state-owned bank, which would partner with community banks and lend to Oregon farms and businesses.

Kitzhaber taps Shepard for labor adviser

Duke Shepard, Oregon AFL-CIO political director since January 2006, has been hired by newly-sworn-in Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber.

Shepard worked for Kitzhaber once before as a field coordinator of Kitzhaber's 1994 campaign for governor. Now Shepard, 38, will be labor and human services adviser to the governor.

The Oregon AFL-CIO won't hire a replacement. Instead, Shepard's responsibilities will be divided between President Tom Chamberlain, Field Director Graham Trainor, and Communications Director Elana Guiney.

Shepard has a bachelor's degree in political science from University of Oregon. Before he was hired by Chamberlain, Shepard managed the 1996 ini-

tiative campaign that raised Oregon's minimum wage, served as policy adviser to Multnomah County Chair Diane Linn, worked on Congressman Peter DeFazio's 2004 re-election campaign, helped create a regional business plan at the Portland Business Alliance, and spent time as an organ-

izer with the Oregon Nurses Association.

Twice elected to the Mt. Hood Community College Board of Directors, Shepard also ran for a seat on the Metro Council in 2010, but dropped out of the race after finishing a distant second in the primary.



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