

ATU dispute with TriMet persists; conciliator called in

Members of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 757 employed at TriMet are planning an informational picket Wednesday, Jan. 26, from 8 to 9 a.m. at the Portland Building, 1120 SW 5th Avenue, Portland. TriMet's board of directors is scheduled to meet at that location starting at 9 a.m.

Drivers and mechanics have been embroiled in a lengthy labor dispute with the transit agency since Nov. 30, 2009. That's the day the union contract covering 2,000 bus and rail operators, mechanics, and support staff expired. State law prohibits transit workers from striking. Contract disputes are settled by binding arbitration. As the two sides waited for the arbitration process to play out, TriMet maintained the terms of the previous contract, covering all scheduled wage and insurance increases. That all changed Jan. 1, 2011, when the transit agency halted cost-of-living wage increases and started taking money out of workers' paychecks to cover a portion of their health insurance costs.

Tri-Met General Manager Neil McFarlane had forewarned workers of the change in a letter to them last September.

Shortly after that announcement, ATU Local 757 President Jon Hunt filed an unfair labor practice (ULP) complaint with the Oregon Employment Relations Board, accusing TriMet of retaliation. [After bargaining over the required 150-day time period, an impasse was declared between the two sides on July 13, 2010. When the sides submitted their "last best and final" offers to the arbitrator, TriMet's proposal contained issues that were never raised at the bargaining table. The union filed an unfair labor practice complaint, charging the

agency with bad-faith bargaining. The ULP delayed the arbitration process.]

ATU held informational pickets outside TriMet board meetings in November and December, and protested at McFarlane's home Dec. 8.

Hunt has told the board, and anyone who will listen, that TriMet would be breaking the law by making changes to the contract without union member agreement.

Union members also testified at board meetings to illustrate how the changes would impact them financially.

At one board meeting, director Lynn Lehrbach (an officer of Teamsters Joint Council No. 37) made a motion that TriMet not implement the costs on workers and retirees while awaiting the arbitrator's decision. The motion failed to get a second.

"As I pleaded with the board to take time to discuss this issue and reflect on the stories they had heard, board mem-

ber Tiffany Sweitzer walked out on us," Hunt said.

The union then reached out to the governor, congressmen, and U.S. senators, all of whom have sent letters or made phone calls to McFarlane encouraging him to return to the bargaining table to resolve the dispute as quickly as possible.

Before leaving office, Gov. Ted Kulongoski asked state conciliator Robert Nightingale to "clear his schedule" in order to assist the sides in resolving the dispute. A meeting has been set for Friday, Jan. 28.

"We have been put in a very difficult position by McFarlane and the TriMet board, who seemingly do not care about the laws in the State of Oregon, the wishes of the state's top government officials, adhering to past practice, employee relations or health and welfare of their own employees, retirees, and their families," Hunt said.

Hunt is asking union members, their families and friends to join him at the rally Jan. 26. He said a large crowd will help send a loud message to McFarlane and the TriMet board to reach an agreement.



ATU's Pepper, the greed-fighting possum, walks an informational picket line prior to a TriMet board meeting.

Below are TriMet board members and their contact information.

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...Evergreen Airlines pilots authorize strike

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tion, becoming ALPA Local 118.

ALPA, the world's largest pilot union, represents nearly 53,000 pilots at 38 airlines in the United States and Canada. But bargaining similarly failed to achieve liftoff under ALPA.

In April 2010, the union submitted a tentative two-year agreement to members that was largely a continuation of previous terms, without raises or improvements. That agreement was a compromise, after management — citing the company's heavy debt load — demanded concessions. ALPA held a ratification vote on the agreement in August 2010: 92 percent of members took part in the vote, and the result was 96 percent against the agreement.

In October, the ALPA executive council at Evergreen passed a resolution declaring a lack of confidence in airline upper management and flight operations management. An ALPA press statement said Evergreen pilots are near their limit of frustration and dissatisfaction with management.

ALPA held the strike authorization vote, and ballots were counted Jan. 7. The vote was 97 percent in favor of strike authorization, with more than 86 percent of the company's pilots and flight engineers participating in the polling.

"We certainly want a contract, not a strike," said flight engineer William

Fink, ALPA's Evergreen unit chairman, in a press statement. "That has been our goal since day one more than six years ago — but the new agreement must provide our members with industry-standard wages, work rules, and benefits. We deserve no less."

The parties are tentatively scheduled

to go back to the negotiating table in February. ALPA can request arbitration from the NMB at any time. If the NMB agrees, either party can reject arbitration. In that event, a 30-day cooling-off period would commence, after which crewmembers could legally strike at Evergreen.

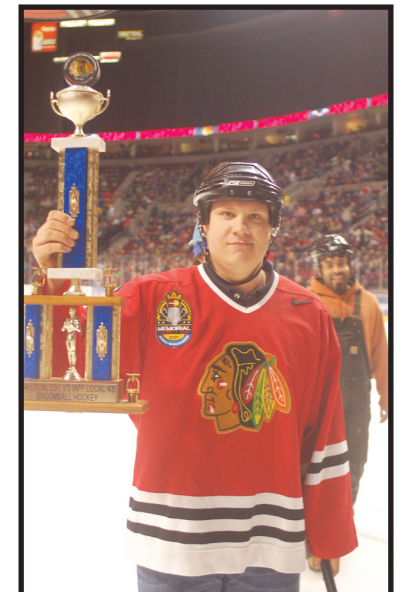
...Unions promote fire safety

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290 training center staff to present the player with \$100 and be honored themselves. On Jan. 8, apprentice Seathl Ollgaard presented \$100 to Winterhawk Sven Bartschi.

"This ceremony is another great way for the public to see who we really are as people and to educate them about the exciting innovations our trade is developing," Scheuermann said.

The promotional campaign appears to be working. Former Winterhawk Shane Halifax is a first-year apprentice plumber. He played broomball, and was brought in for the ceremonial puck drop prior to the Portland-Seattle game, which the Winterhawks won, 2-1.



Former Winterhawk player and first-year plumber apprentice Shane Halifax hoists broomball trophy that Local 290 retained by virtue of their 1-0 victory last year. Local 290 and Local 43 have been facing off in broomball for the last decade.

Retired Carpenter staying busy

Carpenters Local 247 retiree Merle Ehlinger shows off walking canes he made using old handsaws. Ehlinger, 76, is a 55-year member of the union who regularly attends the monthly Carpenters Retirees meetings, along with more than a dozen other retirees. The group meets the second Monday each month at 11 a.m. at Izzy's Grill, 1307 NE 102nd Ave # T, Portland. John Jackson is chair of the retirees group.

