



Gay Pride, Union Pride

Pride at Work, the newly-chartered Oregon AFL-CIO group for gay and lesbian trade unionists, came out June 19 with a float at the Portland Pride Parade. The massive and joyful parade had over 100 entries, and drew tens of thousands of spectators to downtown Portland. Pride at Work's entry consisted of a float festooned with a rainbow made of balloons, which was followed by marchers holding signs and chanting slogans like "Union pride, gay pride!" Participants modeled labor unity, with contingents from the different unions and labor federations marching together. Unions with a strong presence included AFSCME, marching with green T-shirts and balloons behind an "AFSCME Pride" banner; SEIU with its "Lavender Labor" caucus; and UNITE HERE, which has a nationwide "Sleep With the Right People" campaign, which targets hotels that fight unions and discriminate against gay employees.

"The difference between try and triumph is a little umph."

Anonymous

AFL-CIO affiliate AFGE wins runoff election to represent airport screeners

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) won a run-off election to represent the nation's 43,000 airport screeners employed by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

In balloting counted June 23, AFGE, an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, outpolled the independent National Treasury Employees Union 8,903 to 8,447.

The results were announced by the Federal Labor Relations Authority, which runs labor-management relations for federal workers.

Transportation security officers (TSOs) screen passengers at 450 airports nationwide. AFGE Local 1127 is the union local for workers in Oregon, and Local 1121 represents workers in Washington and Alaska.

The TSA was created after airport security was federalized in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Screeners have been trying to organize a union since then, but the anti-union Bush Administration banned unions for the screeners on alleged national security grounds.

After Barack Obama was elected president, TSA Administrator John Pistole approved collective bargaining rights for the workers. That led to an election earlier in April 2011, where the two unions combined won more than 80 percent of the vote. Neither union obtained a majority, resulting in a run-off election.

"We are obviously thrilled with the results, but more importantly are delighted the transportation security officers now will have the full union representation they rightly deserve," said AFGE President John Gage.

Gage said the union will reach out to TSOs nationwide for input on contract details, while remembering needs of screeners at small and large airports

may differ.

"With one nationwide contract, it is essential that we cover all the bases," Gage said. "TSOs care about the work they do, and AFGE is here to make sure that they have the tools and support to accomplish that mission. Only a professional and highly motivated workforce can provide the security this country needs."

Laborers #483 re-elects Beetle

In mail ballots counted June 15, Richard "Buz" Beetle was elected to a third three-year term as business manager of Laborers Local 483, outpolling challenger Ron McKinney 173 to 134.

Business manager is the only full-time elected office at Local 483, which is a public-sector local of the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA).

The local represents 846 public sector workers, including about 600 at the City of Portland, plus workers at the Oregon Zoo, maintenance workers at Portland International Airport and the Port of Portland shipping terminals, landscapers at non-profit Portland Rehabilitation Center, and municipal employees in Mt. Angel, Silverton, and Gervais.

Beetle, 63, said his agenda for the third term will include improving the image of public employees.

"With the attacks we see on public employees going on across the country, we feel it's more important now than ever before that public employees make a stronger connection to the community," Beetle said. "We need to be seen as a resource, not a liability."

Another priority will be winning



RICHARD BEETLE

further gains for a group of seasonal maintenance workers employed by the Portland Parks Bureau. Local 483 has waged a multi-year fight to organize the low-wage unit, which currently consists of about 160 temporary employees, Beetle said.

McKinney, the other candidate for business manager, is a sewer repair

worker at the Portland Department of Transportation and was Local 483's president. His former office will now be filled by former vice president Scott Gibson, who ran unopposed. Also elected unopposed were: Kevin Stampflee, vice president; Thomas Gannon Sorg, secretary-treasurer; Mark Lewis, sergeant-at-arms, and Mike Murphy and Wesley Buchholz, at-large members of the Executive Board. Gibson and Buchholz also outpolled Paul LaCroix to win two spots as delegates to the international convention.

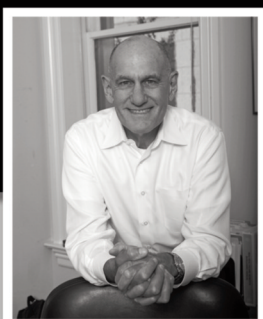
"This is a very exciting time to be in organized labor," Beetle told the Labor Press. "There's a lot of fear and anxiety, but there's a lot of opportunity, as well, to be part of a regeneration of the labor movement."

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