

...Building trades

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natural gas facility, and his participation on safety and health committees.

Avakian cited a bill that he wrote and got passed in the Legislature this year that will return shop classes to middle schools and high schools; his enforcement as labor commissioner of wage and hour laws, and his support of strong prevailing wage laws.

On other issues, both candidates support the "pay or play" model for state health care financing, and both agreed that the new federal health care plan passed by Congress should contain a government-run public option. Avakian took it a step further, saying the country needs a single-payer health care system.

Both candidates oppose cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid to balance the federal budget; they support ending the Bush tax cuts for the super rich; and they want a quick removal of troops from Afghanistan and Iraq.

In closing statements, Witt, a union rep for United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 and a former secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO, pointed out that he is the only candidate in the race who carries a union card. "I am running on a platform that will make a positive difference in people's everyday lives," he said.

Avakian, a former civil rights attorney and state senator, said he has a record of reaching across party lines to get things done. He mentioned the 2007 Oregon Renewable Energy Act that he wrote, and another bill he sponsored that allows home health care workers to form a union. "There's nothing more important than sending someone to Washington, D.C., right now who will hit the ground running and get the job done," he said.

In general business, delegates elected four new Executive Board members to vacant seats. They are Russ Garnett, the newly-elected business manager of Roofers Local 49; Matt Eleazer, president of Bricklayers Local 1; Paul Riggs, executive secretary-treasurer of the Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council; and Jeff Gritz, executive secretary-treasurer of the Central Oregon BCTC.

Delegates also passed five resolutions. They supported the merger of AT&T Wireless and T-Mobile. They called on all regional building trades councils, if they haven't already, to establish a policy — be it a project labor agreement, best value contracting, etc. — that can be presented to local elected officials who inquire about building with union labor. They called on all locals and building trades councils to establish an electronic member alert system that will allow members rapid communications with their lawmakers on issues of importance to the trades. They called for an immediate start to the 10-lane (local preferred alternative) Columbia River Crossing, noting that the replacement bridge project "has been studied, visioned, and processed for over 10 years at a great cost." Lastly, delegates instructed the council to send a letter to Operating Engineers Local 701 demanding that it "cease and desist from allowing members to displace International Longshore and Warehouse Union members at the EGT facility in Longview, Wash."

The council gave a \$500 scholarship to Lindsay Guzman, the daughter of Ben Guzman of Laborers Local 320. Karin Collins, the daughter of Plumbers and Fitters Local 290 member Don Collins, received a \$750 scholarship funded by Ferguson and Wellman Capital Management. Winners were selected by the governor's office based on an application and short essay.

Happy Labor Day!



From the
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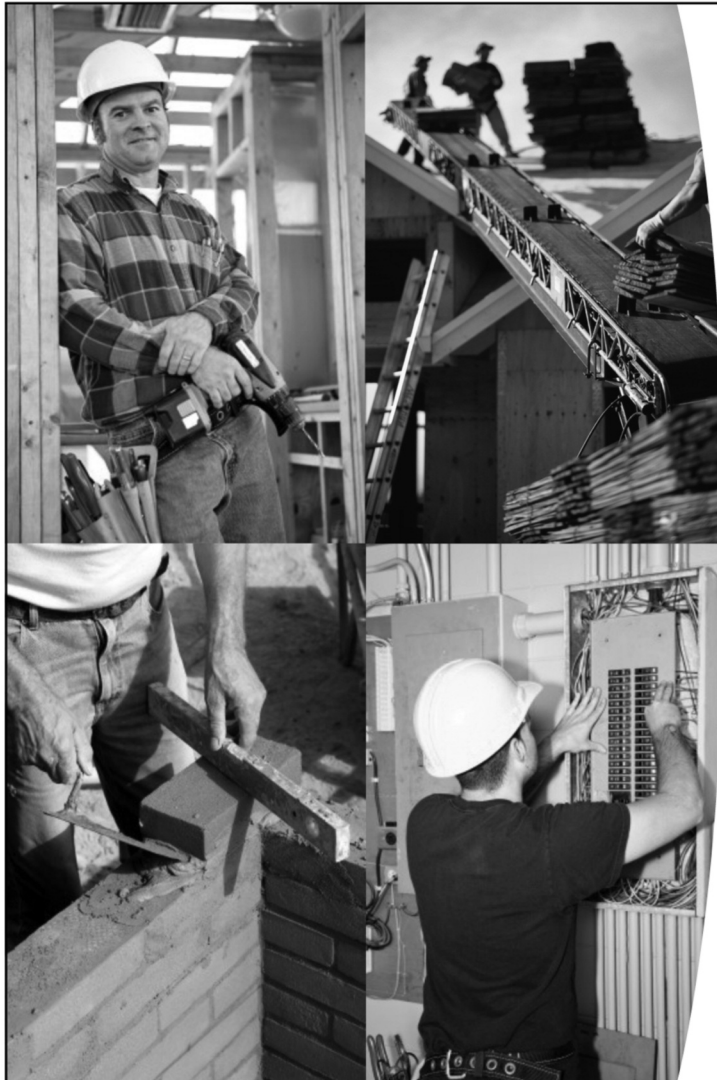
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