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ILWU dispute with EGT Development

Clash in Longview

LONGVIEW— Police officers clashed Sept. 7 with members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) who were blocking a train from delivering grain to a new terminal at the Port of Longview.

The incident led to a shutdown of ports in Seattle, Everett, Anacortes, and Tacoma the following day, where longshoremen refused to report to work for the day.

Longview-based ILWU Local 21 has been trying since January to secure an agreement with EGT Development to use longshore workers to operate a new \$200 million grain export terminal. EGT — a joint venture of Japan-based Itochu Corp, South Korea's STX Pan Ocean and St. Louis-based Bunge North America — leased the property from the Port of Longview, but insists it is not obligated to employ ILWU members. EGT has sued the Port in federal court to avoid hiring them.

ILWU has on several occasions

blocked trains from delivering grain to EGT and has held protest rallies, including one at EGT's corporate office in downtown Portland that drew more than 1,000 people.

More than 125 people have been arrested since the dispute began.

On the morning of Sept. 7, protesters gathered at the Port of Vancouver to block a 107-car Burlington Northern Santa Fe train headed to the EGT terminal to deliver grain. After a two-hour standoff with police, the train was let through.

Later that afternoon, some 400 protesters stood on the tracks at the entrance of the Port of Longview to prevent the train from entering.

According to union officials, 50 police in riot gear charged the group — which included women and children — using batons and pepper spray on some of the protesters. No one was seriously injured.

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On the railroad tracks in Longview, police move against ILWU members Sept. 7. EGT's lease with the Port requires that it employ ILWU members, but EGT is suing in federal court to get out of that. (Photo by Dawn Des Brisay)

Bakers battle prison bread in schools

By DON McINTOSH
Associate Editor

Pop quiz: What does it take to get a job making whole grain buns for the cafeteria at Mountain View High School in Vancouver, Washington?

Answer: A felony conviction.

At least eight school districts in the state of Washington serve baked goods made by inmates at the Airway Heights Correctional Facility, 10 miles west of Spokane.

At Airway Heights, inmates work at an on-site bakery making bread, buns, rolls, Danishes, cookies, and brownies. They're in for drug crimes, property crimes, violent crimes, or sex crimes.

The Airway Heights prison bakery is one of about three dozen enterprises run by Correctional Industries, a unit of the Washington Department of Corrections.

Danielle Wiles, Correctional Industries program manager in Olympia, told the Labor Press the program is intended to provide cost savings to the prison system, and work experience and training for offenders for when they're released back into the community.

Under Washington state law, prison enterprises may sell to state agencies,



Bakers Local 114 member Sergio Ayala, above, earns a union wage and benefits at Franz Bakery in Portland. But Franz finds itself competing for school district business with a prison-run bakery near Spokane.

school districts, and non-profits, but not to the private sector. The law says Correctional Industries is not supposed to "unfairly compete with Washington businesses." And its funds are to be in-

vested in work programs that "minimize the impact on in-state jobs and businesses."

But Correctional Industries does im-

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Multnomah Co. chair steps in to end union standoff

AFSCME Local 88 members will vote on a new three-year contract with Multnomah County.

Members of AFSCME Local 88 will vote Sept. 28 and 29 on a new three-year union contract covering about 2,800 employees of Multnomah County.

The two sides reached agreement Aug. 31 after Multnomah County Chair Jeff Cogen stepped in to end a months-long standoff. Cogen, joined by the county's newly hired labor relations director, was able to reach an agreement in a few hours of bargaining. Until then, the county's chief negotiator had been labor relations consultant Diana Moffat, who was paid \$75,000 to lead bargaining.

Local 88 president Michael Hanna said Moffat's approach was to stall, and then object when the union appealed for intervention from county

decision-makers. It was a big departure from the collaborative relationship the two sides had developed in recent years. In 2007, the county and the union used a problem-solving approach in bargaining, and in 2009, the union volunteered a wage freeze to prevent layoffs. Now, Hanna said, Local 88 was treated in bargaining like an enemy. The county insisted on a two-year contract that eliminated job security and overtime protections, offered no raise in the first year, and opened health benefits to renegotiation in the second year.

"We were at a crossroads, and things were getting ready to go off the rails," Hanna told the Labor Press. "We didn't know if our members were ready to strike, but our bargaining team was resolutely not going to budge."

But the county dropped its concessionary demands when Cogen entered bargaining. Hanna said the new deal is a fair one.

"I wasn't looking at this from the

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