

...Convention action

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“[They’re] new members of the AFL-CIO, your neighbors, the folks who don’t have the benefit of a union on the job, but want to be part of a power to change this state and this country.”

Nussbaum said the Working America canvass results in 20,000 conversations a week around the country, and a pretty good sense of the public mood: angry, isolated, and despairing.

“The foundational problem that we face as a labor movement is that far too few people believe in collective power,” Nussbaum said. “They have no experience with it. It’s only union members any more who have experience with collective power.” Working America, Nussbaum said, is an attempt to extend that power to a wider public.

Other guest speakers included Arlene Holt-Baker, national AFL-CIO executive vice president, and Bob Baugh, executive director of the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Council. Delegates also heard from a succession of political leaders. Besides the three Congressional candidates and Kotek, guest speakers included both of Oregon’s U.S. Senators — Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden — as well as Congressman Peter DeFazio, Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber, Oregon Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum, and Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy.

And delegates took a break Sept. 27 to march to the nearby Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza for a 100-strong rally to Save America’s Postal Service. Unions are campaigning to get Congress to modify an unusual retiree health coverage pre-funding requirement, which they say is pushing the U.S. Postal Service toward default and large-scale service cuts and post office closures.

ELECTING LEADERSHIP

Delegates approved the federation’s leadership for the next few years. President Tom Chamberlain and Secretary-

treasurer Barbara Byrd were re-elected without opposition. Elected to the Oregon AFL-CIO’s nine-member Executive Committee were: Ken Allen, Oregon AFSCME; Kelly Bach, Fire Fighters; Paul Goldberg, Oregon Nurses Association; Jim Gourley, Steelworkers Local 1189; Clif Davis, Electrical Workers Local 48; Jon Hunt, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757; John Mohlis, Oregon State Building Trades Council; Steve Wilson, Machinists Lodge W24; and Cj Mann for the central labor councils. Also elected were at-large members of the larger Executive Board of which the Executive Committee is a part: Pat Smith, Painters and Allied Trades District Council 5; Tim Frew, Electrical Workers Local 280; Mark Holiday, Operating Engineers Local 701; Lou Christian, Plumbers and Fitters Local 290; Gary Gillespie, AFSCME Council 75; Kevin Card, Letter Carriers Branch 82; Bonnie Luisi, Oregon School Employees Association; Bob Petroff, Machinists Lodge W24; Ken Saether, Communication Workers Local 7906; Jeff Smith, Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 8; Harold Fleshman, Oregon Nurses Association; Tim Roark, American Federation of Government Employees; David Tischer, Laborers Local 320; Bruce Fife, Musicians; and Tom Holden, Steelworkers Local 6163. The new Executive Board was sworn into office immediately after the convention adjourned.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Several honors were given out over the course of the convention. On Day One, a group of Portland taxi drivers were brought to the podium, where Communications Workers of America Local 7901 Madelyn Elder described their gutsy campaign to form a unionized taxi cab cooperative based on a similar effort in Denver. On Day Three, AFL-CIO affiliated unions and individuals were recognized for political and



The Oregon AFL-CIO gave out several honors at the Eugene convention (see the article with this photo for details of the awards). From left are Matt Hilton of Oregon AFSCME; Leah Okin and Roger Gayton of IATSE Local 28; Jeannette Turner of CWA Local 7901; Oregon AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Byrd; Jim Gourley of United Steelworkers; Gary Gillespie, president of Oregon AFSCME; and Bonnie Luisi and David Rives of OSEA/AFT.

organizing achievements:

- Willy Myers of Sheet Metal Local 16, for developing a program to train new union members about the labor movement; third year apprentices in Local 16 take part in a week-long intensive training about labor history, workers’ rights laws, and the reasons for labor’s involvement in politics.

- Jim (and Lisa) Gourley of United Steelworkers, for outstanding participation in Labor 2010, as the AFL-CIO’s 2010 electoral effort was dubbed.

- Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) and Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 7901 for largest private-sector organiz-

ing victories — OSEA’s campaign to unionize 110 First Student school bus drivers at Gresham-Barlow school district, and CWA’s unionization vote among 150 workers at Dosha Salon Spa.

- Oregon AFSCME for the largest public sector organizing victory — 165 City of Lake Oswego workers who joined in November 2010.

- Oregon AFSCME, again, for outstanding statewide involvement in Labor 2010.

- American Federation of Teachers (AFT)-Oregon and its affiliate Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) for dedicating the most staff to work on the Oregon AFL-CIO’s Labor

2010 political campaign; leading up to the November 2010 election, OSEA deployed nearly 30 temporary campaign workers to do member outreach.

- International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 28 for highest percentage of membership involvement; up to 20 percent of the membership took part in events organized by the Oregon AFL-CIO.

“Brothers and sisters, we have so much at stake right now,” Chamberlain declared, closing the convention. “This is a moment in history that will never happen again. It’s either going to get better or it’s going to get worse, and we can make that decision if we walk out that door as one.”

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www.AnneCan.com

Paid for by McEnerly-Ogle for Council
1701 Broadway Street, #309, Vancouver, WA 98663