

Local Motion

Postal worker rallies continue

October 2011

A list of Oregon and Southwest Washington workplaces deciding whether to be union-represented – as reported by the National Labor Relations Board and the Oregon Employment Relations Board.

Voting in union elections

Date	Workplace (Location) Union	Yes	No	
9/29	First Student (Grants Pass) Teamsters Local 962 DECERT	45	59	👉
10/12	Fund for the Public Interest call center (Portland) CWA Local 7901	19	5	👉
10/18	Franz Bakery outlet (Springfield) Bakers Local 114	4	0	👉
10/19	Oregon Health Authority (Salem) SEIU Local 503	15	36	👉
10/19	Teacher Standards & Practices Comm. (Salem) SEIU Local 503	14	2	👉
10/18	Franz Bakery outlet (Newport) Bakers Local 114	6	6	👉

Requesting a union election

Workplace (Location) Union	Number of workers in unit
Neighbor Impact Head Start (Redmond) OSEA DECERT	12
Down River / ITW (Woodland) AWPPW DECERT	12
Akzo Nobel Coatings (Salem) Teamsters Local 324 DECERT	29
Eagle Painting and Construction (Hubbard) Painters District Council 5	2

LEGEND

- 👉 : workers will be union-represented
- 👈 : workers will be on their own
- DECERT** : A decertification election occurs when some union-represented workers declare that the union no longer has majority support. A 'yes' vote is a vote for the union.

Portland-area letter carriers and their allies held early morning rallies the week of Nov. 7 to encourage Congress to save the U.S. Postal Service, without layoffs and cutbacks.

The postmaster general is proposing massive post office closings, reducing days of delivery and service standards, as well as huge workforce cuts starting Nov. 18 if Congress doesn't act to fix it.

"The cuts are not necessary. The postal service is not broke," said Jim Cook, president of Portland-area National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 82, which organized the rallies. "Despite competition from the Internet and the severe recession, the U.S. Postal Service had remained profitable. The financial problem was created by Congress and Congress can fix it."

Cook pointed to a 2006 congressional mandate requiring the Postal Service to pre-fund 75 years of retirement benefits within 10 years, which costs USPS \$5.5 billion per year and makes the Postal Service appear to be losing money. No other U.S. government agency is required to pre-fund retirement in this manner.

"This was a union-busting trick by the Republicans," Cook said.

A labor-backed bill in the U.S. House (H.R. 1351), which has a bipartisan majority of co-sponsors (226), would address the pre-funding issue. The bill, however, is bottled up in committee by its chair, right-wing U.S. Rep. Darrel Issa (R-Calif.).

Issa has introduced his own bill, which would gut collective bargaining rights for postal workers and privatize much of the work, among other things. H.R. 2309 was approved by the House



Postal workers rally in front of the Piedmont/MLK Jr. Post Office in Northeast Portland Nov. 8 to save Saturday and door-to-door delivery. Congress is considering several bills, two of which will dramatically cut service. The rally was one of four held by NALC Branch 82 the week of Nov. 7. Following this event, USPS management warned the union that any letter carriers caught picketing in uniform would be immediately suspended and possibly fired.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform on Oct. 13. The bill had not been acted on by the full House at press time.

A postal reform measure in the Senate — the 21st Century Postal Service Act (S. 1789) — cleared the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Nov. 9 on a bipartisan vote of 9-1. The committee is chaired by Joseph Lieberman (I-Conn.).

Postal worker unions oppose this bill too, saying pre-funding retiree health insurance is still the top policy priority. The measure ties the future of Saturday service to profitability and mandates the phase-out of door-to-door delivery for 35 million households and businesses, putting 80,000 postal jobs at risk.

"A retiree health pre-funding mandate will make profits impossible," NALC said.

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