

Steelworkers ratify 4-year contract at Cascade Steel

Ten weeks after ending their strike, members of United Steelworkers Local 8378 ratified a new four-year labor agreement at Cascade Steel Rolling Mills, a subsidiary of Portland-based Schnitzer Steel Industries.

The steel mill's roughly 300 workers will get annual raises of 2, 2, 2.5, and 2.5 percent under the new contract. Before the strike, the company was offering 0.5 percent annual raises. By the end of the agreement, hourly wages will range from \$20.54 to \$32.47 depending on classification — up from the previous range of \$18.79 to \$29.70. The agreement's start date is April 1,

2012, when the previous contract expired, but pay increases are not retroactive.

The new contract also increases the company match to workers' 401(k) retirement plan by 1 percent in the final year.

But workers' share of health insurance premiums will also increase — to 13, 12, and 10 percent, respectively, for plans that workers currently pay 10, 5, and 0 percent of.

Cascade Steel, in McMinnville, Oregon, melts scrap metal from Schnitzer's recycling business to make re-bar, wire, and other products.

Workers walked out April 8 to protest bad faith bargaining, and stayed out for 12 days, shutting down the mill.

USW staff representative Ron Rodgers said the new contract goes a long way toward rebuilding the relationship with the employer.

As part of the settlement — which workers approved June 29 — the union dropped two unfair labor practice charges it had filed with the National Labor Relations Board alleging labor law violations — including repudiating the contract and failure to bargain in good faith.

But a third charge is still being investigated — that the company trampled workers' right to strike "by authorizing, participating in or ratifying ... vehicular attacks or threats on picketers." The charge stems from two incidents in which picketing strikers were struck by vehicles entering or leaving company property. Melt shop worker Lee Frakes was injured when he was bumped by a car driven by a security guard, and fellow striker Kurt Kirkpatrick was struck by a truck leaving the mill. Both received medical treatment and physical therapy and are back on the job.

...Taxi

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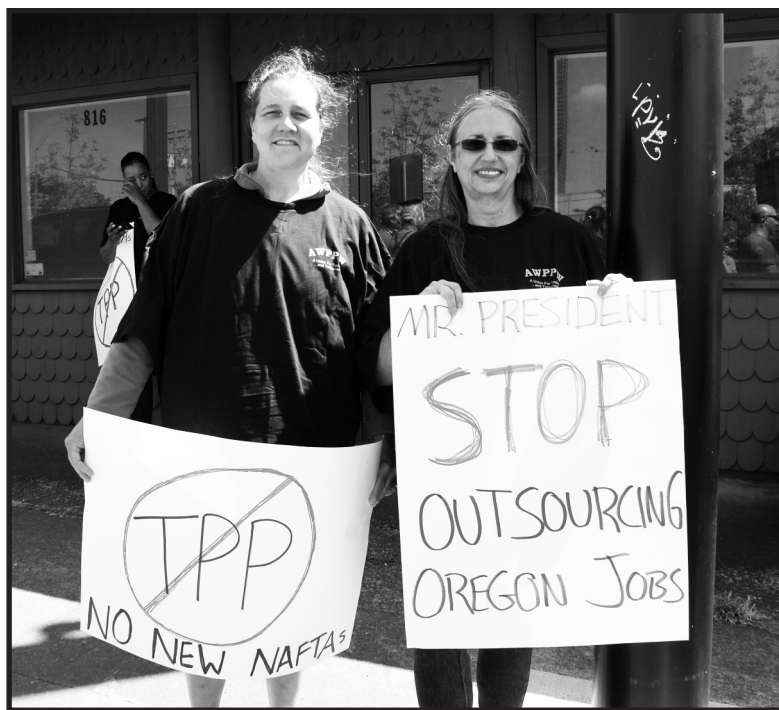
rules, and they want to get it right the first time.

Butler said staff are researching other cities' practices, finalizing the January labor market study, summarizing and compiling months of public comment about it, refreshing a 2008 market demand study, and evaluating new models for that study. [The City concluded after the 2008 study that there wasn't enough market demand to justify issuing additional taxi permits, since that would result in more drivers competing for the same business and lower individual earnings. But conditions could have changed since then.]

Butler told drivers she'll do everything in her power to have the proposals ready for the Board's Sept. 19 meeting. It could then be taken up by the mayor and City Council in October. The mayor and City Council plan to act by year's end, Butler said.

Butler wouldn't say exactly what the proposal will include, but said it will include performance standards by which companies would be rated for customer service, environmental impact, and services they provide to drivers. Companies that failed to meet standards could lose permits, while companies that met or exceeded them could gain them.

"It doesn't make sense to issue the same amount of permits every year without taking a look at how the company is performing up to community standards," Butler told the Labor Press.



Paper factory lab technician Jeannie Schell (left) with her retired co-worker Barbara Robbins, oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a still-in-negotiation trade treaty covering the entire Pacific Rim.

...Clackamas County

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is her first political campaign. Damon's opponent in November is former Republican state representative Tootie Smith. Smith, who received money from some of the same donors as Ludlow, finished second behind Damon in a four-person primary. NOLC endorsed Damon in the primary.

In other races for Board seats, labor-endorsed Martha Schrader won outright in a three-person primary race for Position 3. Schrader is a former county commissioner and Democratic state senator.

Clackamas County commission seats are nonpartisan, with commissioners and the chair elected at-large. Come 2013, in addition to Schrader and Savas, Jim Bernard, a Democrat, will have seats on the Board.

Millworkers protest free trade at Obama event

Members of a beleaguered industrial union held protest signs July 24 outside a \$500-a-plate campaign fundraiser in Portland for President Barack Obama.

"Trade agreements have continued to destroy working class jobs, especially on the manufacturing side," explained Greg Pallesen, vice president of the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers (AWPPW). "After every trade agreement, we see the repercussions as plants close here, many times profitable plants."

"We're very concerned that if Romney (presumptive Republican nominee Mitt) gets elected, it would be 10 times worse," Pallesen said. "But I don't believe we should cut Obama any slack. When he campaigned the first time, he said NAFTA-style agreements needed to be changed and that they were destroying the economy and middle class."

But in office, Obama reversed that stance and pushed Congress to pass NAFTA-style treaties with South Korea, Panama, and Colombia — deals which were negotiated during the

George W. Bush Administration. Now the Administration is negotiating, in secret, a NAFTA-style treaty known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which would cover the entire Pacific Rim.

Trade-related layoffs and closures have cost the jobs of thousands of Northwest paper mill workers in recent years.

Said AWPPW member Jeannie Schell, a lab technician at Graphic Imaging, a North Portland manufacturer of paper packaging: "We are protesting to save our jobs."



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