



NORTHWEST

# LABOR PRESS

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## Labor Day PICNICS

Labor Day – Monday, Sept. 3



Hamburgers, hot dogs, and politicians will be in abundant supply at union-sponsored Labor Day picnics throughout the state. Above, Congressmen Kurt Schrader and Earl Blumenauer grill some burgers for union members at last year's picnic at Oaks Park in Portland. Check out the list of picnics on this page for the location nearest you.

Every year, labor organizations throughout Oregon hold Labor Day picnics. Here is a list of picnics taking place:

**BEND** — Solidarity Day Picnic at Pioneer Park in Bend. 12:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Sponsored by the Central Oregon Central Labor Council. Contact Linda Bradetich at 541-350-0965 or Steve Williamsen at 541-678-0235 for more information.

**EUGENE/SPRINGFIELD** — John Lively Picnic Shelters, behind SPLASH at 6100 Thurston Road in Springfield. Noon – 4 p.m. Please bring a side dish. SPLASH will offer a swim rate for picnic participants who wish to use the wave pool. Sponsored by the Lane County Central Labor Council. Contact Cj Mann at 541-606-9203 for more information.

**MEDFORD** — TouVelle State Park, 8425 Table Rock Road, Central Point. 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Donations accepted, and there is a \$5 charge for parking. Sponsored by the Southern Oregon Central Labor Council. Call Kathy McUne at 541-664-0804 for more information.

**NORTH BEND** — Ferry Road Park in North Bend. 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Sponsored by the Southwestern Oregon Central Labor

Council. Asking for donation of non-perishable food items for the needy. For more information, contact Robert Westerman at 541-756-3907 or [ibew932@frontier.com](mailto:ibew932@frontier.com), or Kay Nelson at 541-756-0579 or [knelson@ufcw555.org](mailto:knelson@ufcw555.org).

**PORTLAND** — Oaks Amusement Park in Southeast Portland. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., with a brief program at 1 p.m., featuring U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley. Food scrip sells for 50 cents. Deluxe ride bracelets are \$9. All are welcome to attend, whether your union is reserving a spot or not. Sponsored by the Northwest Oregon Labor Council. Call 503-235-9444 for more information.

The Oregon Pacific Railroad Shuttle Train will transport people (\$3 per person roundtrip) to and from Oaks Park from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Parking will be available at the Portland Opera, 211 SE Caruthers St., and in the vicinity of SE Ivon and 4th St.

**SALEM** — Riverfront Park in Salem. 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Sponsored by Marion-Polk-Yamhill Central Labor Council. Cost: two food items per person or donation to the food bank. Call Judy at 503-362-7057 or [jsugnet@att.net](mailto:jsugnet@att.net) for more information.

**THE DALLES** — Sorosis Park Shelter in The Dalles. 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Potluck (bring a salad, bag of chips, etc.) Sponsored by Mid-Columbia Central Labor Council. Call Walt Denstedt at 541-298-4783 for more information.

**OREGON STATE FAIR** - The Oregon AFL-CIO labor booth in the Central Canopy area continues to be staffed with union volunteers during the entire two weeks of the fair, including Labor Day.

## Transit Union files to overturn TriMet's contract arbitration win

The union that represents 2,000-plus TriMet employees is asking the Oregon Employment Relations Board (ERB) to overturn last month's contract arbitration decision.

Arbitrator David Gaba was required to choose one side's final offer, and he picked TriMet's in his July 12 ruling, citing the public interest in reducing the extraordinary cost of health care for members and retirees — over \$30,000 a year for full-family coverage under a Regence BlueCross BlueShield plan. But in his decision he also said some provisions in TriMet's offer could be found illegal. Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 757 follows up on those in an unfair labor practice complaint it filed with ERB on Aug. 8.

The complaint alleges that TriMet violated Oregon's Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA) in several respects:

- TriMet's final offer, presented to the arbitrator, proposed to retroactively impose health plan changes, and to put

new hires on a 401(k)-style defined contribution retirement plan. But the proposals lacked significant details. During the hearing before the arbitrator, TriMet offered testimony clarifying the proposals. That, Local 757 argues, was a change in its offer and thus bad faith bargaining.

- TriMet's plan to deduct retroactive health plan payments from workers' wages violates Oregon wage and hour law, which says employers can't make deductions from wages without employee's written authorization, individually or through a collective bargaining agreement. And contract proposals that violate other laws are illegal under PECBA.

- TriMet's offer ends the practice of paying union officers to represent members in grievance meetings. ATU says in its complaint that during the arbitration hearing, a TriMet manager testified that ATU had filed an excessive number of grievances, and that this proposal was designed to limit ATU

and its bargaining unit members use of the grievance process. Thus, the union argues, the purpose of the proposal is to retaliate against bargaining unit members for exercising their rights under the contract, which violates PECBA.

- Under the previous contract, retirees got a annual cost of living increase of 3 to 7 percent, but TriMet's

proposal bases retiree pension increases on inflation, which has been less than 3 percent in recent years. That takes away a benefit retirees already earned, ATU argues, and thus violates promises in the previous contract.

- TriMet also announced Aug. 1 that it is discontinuing annual payments to two union-administered funds — the Recreation Trust Fund and the Em-

ployee Assistance Program. The old contract spells out payments to the funds, but TriMet's final offer is silent on them. ATU says discontinuing the payments unilaterally alters the status quo.

ERB has assigned the case to administrative law judge Wendy Greenwald for investigation.

## Unionists plan welcome party for postmaster general

VANCOUVER, Wash. — Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe will be speaking to the Greater Portland Postal Customer Council Mailer's Conference and Expo Aug. 21 at the Vancouver Hilton and Convention Center — and union members plan to be there to greet him with picket signs.

On July 1, Donahoe, claiming a financial crisis, began massive closures and cuts to mail processing plants and post offices, while changing delivery

standards to allow the delay of first class mail. Postal unions say the U.S. Postal Service isn't broke. They maintain that a politically motivated mandate passed by Congress in 2006 that requires the agency to pre-fund its retiree health benefits out to 75 years is unfairly costing USPS \$5.5 billion a year. No other public agency and no corporation has to do this.

Postal unions believe the intent of the 2006 law was to bleed USPS dry so

that it could be privatized.

The protest will be from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 21, at the Vancouver Hilton, 301 W. 6th St. For more information, call 503-752-5112.

The theme of the mailer's conference is "Bridging the Future ... Together, which USPS describes in publicity material for the conference as "empowering businesses to anticipate, manage and leverage postal change for a competitive advantage."