

Coalition of Portland unions support school bond measure

A coalition of Portland unions, including teachers, firefighters, police, city and county workers, announced support for the Portland Public Schools (PPS) bond measure that will be on the ballot in November. This coalition includes the Portland Association of Teachers (PAT), Portland Fire Fighters Association Local 43, Portland Police Association, and City of Portland AFSCME Local 189 and Multnomah County Employees AFSCME Local 88. Measure 26-144 will fund school repairs, earthquake readiness, and renovating Grant High School, Roosevelt High School, Franklin High School, and Faubion K-8. It will be paid for by a property tax increase of \$1.10 per \$1,000 of taxable assessed property value for the first eight years. Thus, a

home assessed at \$200,000 would pay \$220 a year for the first eight years. After that, the cost will decrease to 30 cents per \$1,000 of taxable assessed property value (or \$60 a year on a \$200,000 home) for four years after that.

"Students need a safe and healthy learning environment. This bond is vital to rebuilding and moving our schools into the 21st century," said Jim Forquer, president of Fire Fighters Local 43.

Gwen Sullivan, president of Port-

land Association of Teachers, said the bond will include a local oversight committee made up of teachers, school staff, parents, and community members, "to ensure our students get the quality schools they need and Portland taxpayers get the best return on their investment."

Daryl Turner, president of the Portland Police Association, added that the bond "will not only result in safer, stronger buildings, but safer and stronger communities. With this bond we have an opportunity to support Port-

land's struggling middle-class families by providing living wage jobs and investments in our minority communities through responsible contracting."

Last month the Portland School Board formalized a committee charged with monitoring bond-funded projects and offering advice to the school board.

John Mohlis, executive secretary of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council, was named to the committee, along with six others. Chairing the committee would be Kevin Spellman, a local management

consultant and trainer for construction owners, contractors and industry professionals.

Other committee members include: Anita Decker – COO, Bonneville Power Administration

Louis Fontenot – development manager, Trammell Crow Company

Steve March – auditor, Multnomah County

Willy Paul – executive director, Kaiser National Facilities Services

Tom Peterson – chief engineer, City of Portland.

Working America canvasser saves woman from burning home

Michael Taeu, a Working America organizer, was out talking to people in Oregon City on Sept. 26 when he saw something he doesn't usually see: smoke pouring out of the windows of one of the houses in the neighborhood.

Taeu could have turned around, but he didn't. Instead, he went into the house, helped rescue a woman trapped inside, and put out the fire.

Here's the story as reported by the Oregonian:

"Taeu said the door was open, so he called out to see if anyone was home and heard a woman yell for help. He

went into the smoke-filled home and discovered the woman on the second floor.

"I couldn't see her when I got upstairs because of all the smoke," said Taeu, who works with the Oregon branch of Working America. "So I asked her to call out to me a few times and was able to find her."

He escorted her to the stairs and she left the home. Taeu then grabbed the hose, stayed on the balcony so he could see into the home and put out the flames.

Brandon Paxton, a spokesman for

the Clackamas County fire department, praised Michael for his quick thinking.

"I know that woman is grateful for what he did," said Paxton. "It was definitely a courageous and selfless act."

Earlier in September, Working America organizers in Center Township, Pennsylvania, also came to the assistance of their neighbors. They spotted a man trying to rob a home — and Working America's John Tillar called the police, leading to the suspect's capture.

Barry Kramer, the local police chief, "said the description they gave was so accurate that police had a suspect in

custody just a short time later," according to the Beaver County Times.

Working America is a community affiliate of the AFL-CIO, and is for people without the benefit of a union on the job. The Oregon chapter has offices in the basement of the Oregon Labor Center at 3645 SE 32nd Ave. (just south of Powell Blvd), Portland.

On its national web page, Working America said: "We couldn't be prouder of Michael and John, who really exemplify what Working America is all about: people helping each other by building a relationship face-to-face. Working America organizers were able to lend a helping hand in these dangerous situations because they're out in communities every day, meeting people and listening to what they have to say.

"We talk to thousands of people every week, and while we're not always fighting crime or putting out fires, we are committed to getting people more engaged so that they can make a difference in their own lives. Whether it's helping in an emergency or the long-term work of building a better economy, we're stronger together."

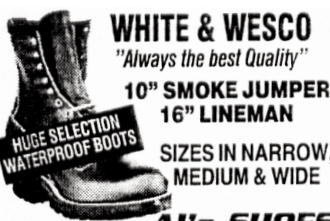
Laborers #483 backs Smith for mayor

Laborers Local 483 has endorsed Jefferson Smith for mayor of Portland. Local 483 represents City workers who maintain streets, parks, and water treatment plants.

Smith, a two-term state representative, is backed by three other City worker unions — AFSCME Local 189, Portland Fire Fighters Local 43, and Portland Police Association — as well as the Portland Association of Teachers, Communications Workers of America Local 7901, and the Oregon, Southern Idaho District Council of Laborers.

The other candidate in the race, former city commissioner Charlie Hales, has the endorsement of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757, Operating Engineers Local 701, Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters, Service Employees International Union locals 49 and 503, Teamsters Joint Council 37, and United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555.

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