

By margin of 60 to 40 percent

Anti-light rail measure passes in Clackamas Co.

Several labor organizations stepped up to defend light rail in Clackamas County, but judging by the vote results, no amount of effort would have defeated Measure 3-401. The anti-light rail ballot initiative passed by a 3-to-2 margin in a Sept. 18 special election, barring the County from spending any money on "public rail transit systems" without it being first approved by voters. Turnout was low, with only 39 percent of the County's 217,518 registered voters casting ballots.

The measure's passage is the fourth in a string of defeats for advocates of infrastructure and development in Clackamas County.

Neither side spent much money in the campaign, but Jesse Cornett, staff person for the campaign opposing the measure, said if it wasn't for union support, the measure would have passed by an even wider margin. Organized labor was the biggest backer of Positively Clackamas — the political action committee formed to oppose Measure 3-401. International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Local 48, Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council, Teamsters Joint Council No. 37, and United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 555 contributed \$500 to \$4,000 each. Unions also mailed literature about the measure to members living in Clackamas County, including Oregon AFSCME, after Local 350, its Clackamas County affiliate, took a stand against the measure. [Local 350 represents 1,900 workers at three county departments, five municipal governments and three service districts in Clackamas County.]

"If you're not building infrastructure, you're not building jobs," said UFCW Local 555 Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Anderson. Light rail spurs economic development, Anderson said — including retail, the sector that employs most Local 555 members.

Clackamas Rail Vote, the political action committee that supported 3-401, was funded mostly by out-of-state conservatives, including Nevada millionaire and self-described sex hypnotist Loren Parks. Parks donated \$250,000 to two political action committees,

which in turn provided \$15,000 of in-kind support for advertising.

In the last 18 months, Clackamas County voters have also turned down a \$130 million bond for upgrades to Clackamas Community College, struck down a \$5 per year vehicle registration fee that would have paid for improvements to the Sellwood Bridge, and passed a citizen initiative requiring a county-wide vote before any municipal government can create an urban renewal district. The latest measure passed with 60.2 percent support, though turnout was relatively low, with 84,621 ballots cast (39 percent of registered voters).

In the short term, Measure 3-401's impact will be largely symbolic, since TriMet's Portland-Milwaukie "Orange Line" is already under construction, and there are no other current plans for light rail expansion. Clackamas County Commission contributed \$20 million toward the line, which Cornett points out is less than 2 percent of the project's cost. Most of the money to build the line is coming from the federal government.



Longview/Kelso students don hard hats

Butch Willman, business manager of Longview Laborers Local 791, shows high school students what it's like to work from a scissor-lift at the second annual Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Construction Career Fair held Sept. 28 at the Cowlitz Expo Center. High school students from throughout the area attended the fair to learn what it takes to work in construction. Hands-on booths were set up by construction unions, contractors, apprenticeship training programs, government agencies, and other groups, allowing students to operate a backhoe, to jack-hammer a cement barrier, lay bricks, weld, and more. The event was hosted by Kelso High School and attracted nearly 900 students throughout the day. (Photo courtesy of Sheila Mace, Kelso High School.)

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Date: November 13, 2012

Time: 11:00 am – 2:00 pm

**Location: McMenamins at the Kennedy School – Gymnasium
5736 NE 33rd Ave, Portland Oregon 97211**

Bond is set at \$500. To find out if you know any of the lock-down participants please visit our website www.constructing-hope.com Goal for this event is to raise \$25,000 to help fund our general operations including: basic tools and equipment for class and to complete community projects.