

Carpenters Food Bank donations near all-time low

Cash donations to the Carpenters Food Bank are at an all-time low, while distribution is reaching record levels, reports Mike Fahey, who coordinates the operation with his wife Sandy.

Fahey is a retired executive secretary-treasurer of the Portland Metal Trades Council who helped start the food bank in 1983 to assist out-of-work and striking union members from the Carpenters and Steelworkers unions. At the time, Fahey was a leader of Pile Drivers, Divers and Shipwrights Local 2416.

"I've heard that a lot of people think we shut down after the big Carpenters merger," said Fahey, referring to the merger of 15 locals in January 2011. "That's not the case. We're still open."

Fahey said the food bank, which is open to the public, distributes 700 food boxes a month. In the past, distri-

bution levels have ranged from 450 to 600 boxes a month.

Food boxes are handed out the third Friday each month from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. (people start lining up as early as 5 a.m.) at the union building on the corner of North Lombard Street and Brandon Avenue. The building was owned by Carpenters Local 247 prior to the merger. Collected food is stored in the basement.

And though it is an all-volunteer operation and the space is donated, it costs money to buy the food from the Oregon Food Bank, and it takes gas to get it.

With the holiday season rapidly approaching and the economy still struggling, the food bank is bracing for a very busy November and December. "Even at bulk rate prices, food items are becoming more and more expensive," Fahey said.

Cash donations to help buy food can be sent to:

Food Bank
P.O. Box 17358
Portland, OR 97217

For more information about the Carpenters Food Bank, call Fahey at 503-970-2482.

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