

# Union-affiliated cab company hits the streets of Portland

A union-affiliated cab company made its debut April 19, opening for business on the streets of Portland for a test run before a formal launch in late May.

Nearly all of Union Cab's 50 orange-and-blue vehicles are brand-new, most of them Toyota Prius hybrids, and they're equipped with dashboard computers and a digital dispatch system that uses GPS to help drivers respond quickly to service requests.

The launch is the culmination of a years-long effort by a group of immigrant drivers who campaigned against exploitation by several Portland cab companies, helped by Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 7901 and the Oregon AFL-CIO. A City of Portland study found that taxi drivers, classed as independent contractors, average less than \$6.22 an hour after paying "kitties" of over \$500 a week to



companies like Broadway. But at the one driver-owned co-op — Radio Cab — kitties were lower, and earnings

higher. In November, Portland City Council approved 50 new taxi permits so that Union Cab could form as a sec-

ond driver-owned co-op. [Like most cities, Portland regulates the taxi industry, and limits the number of taxis that may operate.]

In January, Union Cab leased an office at 14415 SE Stark. Union Cab's new driver-owners haven't yet secured affordable health insurance, a major goal. But they're the first taxi drivers in Portland to have comprehensive auto insurance for their vehicles. They also plan to obtain occupational accident insurance, since as independent contractors, they aren't eligible for workers' compensation if they are injured on the job in a collision.

Customers can call 503-408-1234 — 24 hours a day, seven days a week — and be picked up by a Union Cab, driven by a member of CWA Local 7901.

Union Cab general manager Kedir Wako said plans for the grand opening

include a celebration with AFL-CIO and CWA Local 7901, and a day-long offer of free taxi service to the public. The date had not yet been scheduled as of press time.

If all goes as planned, later this year customers will be able to reserve a cab at Union Cab's web site, [union-cabpdx.com](http://union-cabpdx.com); by text message; and even via a smartphone app.

## ...ATU #757

(From Page 1)

However, for TriMet to condition bargaining on prior receipt of ATU proposals would violate Oregon's Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA), Hansen replied April 29. PECBA says the two sides must meet and negotiate; neither side may require the other to submit written proposals in advance.

Hansen listed 16 dates the union could meet in May and June, and noted that the two sides *did* agree [before Stedman ended the talks] that 18 specific media organizations, plus radio and television, could attend.

"It is my hope that you will honor that small point of agreement," Hansen wrote, "and join with the Union in inviting those media representatives to our first bargaining session."

# ...City of Portland park rangers want a union

(From Page 1)

at one time."

Sachs (permanent) makes \$17 an hour and has health insurance, sick leave, vacation, and a retirement benefit. His partner (seasonal) does the same work for \$11 an hour, with no benefits and a looming termination date.

"Eleven dollars an hour. Honestly, it's insulting," Sachs said.

Armed only with pepper mace, the rangers patrol parks to enforce bans on camping, drinking alcohol without a permit, and letting dogs run off-leash outside of designated areas. After two weeks of training in "verbal judo," report writing, and radio handling, they head out to provide a security presence.

Last July, it was Sachs and his partner Asa Arden who — based on a description from a jogger who'd been attacked on the Wildwood Trail — led police to a homeless camper who was later convicted of several rape and sexual assault charges.

And last June, it was ranger Brian Tierney who discovered the body of teenager Mayra Sophia Cruz Rodriguez in Washington Park; a homeless man-

was later convicted of her murder and that of Nikayla Powell.

"We've shown our worth," says Sachs, who used to work as a Multnomah County Sheriff's deputy. "We're the eyes and ears of the City in the parks."

But at the end of an eight-month "season," most rangers have unemploy-

ment to look forward to. There's no guarantee of reemployment the following year, and generally, only about a third of them return.

"It's stressful for me and my family," says seasonal ranger Vicente Harrison, a 35-year-old father of two. Harrison — one of eight bike-riding rangers responsible for patrolling 21 downtown parks

— says he loves the job: interacting with people, helping visitors, directing the homeless to services. But come September, he'll be out of a job.

Askin says Local 483's campaign to unionize rangers is part of a larger campaign against City reliance on low-wage, no-benefit, part-time, temporary and seasonal workers.



(International Standard Serial Number 0894-444X)  
Established in 1900 at Portland, Oregon  
as a voice of the labor movement.

4275 NE Halsey St., P.O. Box 13150,  
Portland, Ore. 97213  
Telephone: (503) 288-3311

Editor: Michael Gutwig  
Staff: Don McIntosh, Cheri Rice

Published on a semi-monthly basis on the first and third Fridays of each month by the Oregon Labor Press Publishing Co., Inc., a non-profit corporation owned by 20 unions and councils including the Oregon AFL-CIO. Serving more than 120 union organizations in Oregon and SW Washington. Subscriptions \$13.75 per year for union members.

Group rates available to trade union organizations.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID  
AT PORTLAND, OREGON.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS NOTICE: Three weeks are required for a change of address. When ordering a change, please give your old and new addresses and the name and number of your local union.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to  
NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS, P.O. BOX 13150,  
PORTLAND, OR 97213-0150



Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters, Elevators, Plasterers, Family

# Summer's commin'!

Spruce up your home this spring and be ready to relax and enjoy the summer.

*Apply today for one of our many loan options to help upgrade your home, patio, or yard.*



9955 SE Washington Street  
Portland, OR 97216

(503) 253-8193 \* (800) 356-6507  
[www.ibewuwfcu.com](http://www.ibewuwfcu.com)

Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters, Elevators, Plasterers, Family