



Allen Brennan is a new staffperson at the Oregon AFL-CIO. He will assist laid-off workers get benefits they're entitled to. Photo by Russell Sanders.

Allen Brennan joins AFL-CIO to help assist laid off workers

The Oregon AFL-CIO has a new staffperson to help laid-off workers get benefits they're entitled to.

Allen Brennan — who was himself laid off from a pulp mill in Camas, Washington — springs into action whenever local union employers announce mass layoffs. Beyond unemployment insurance, laid off workers are entitled to dislocated worker assistance if their skills aren't in demand, and even more generous benefits if

offshoring or foreign competition contributed to their job loss. The benefits can include career counseling, trade school tuition, relocation assistance, and extended unemployment benefits that allow the recipient to attend school while collecting unemployment.

In 2007, Brennan was laid off from his job as an electrical equipment operator at the Camas pulp and paper mill now owned by Georgia-Pacific. Then vice president of Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers (AWPPW) Local 5, he went to work as a peer advocate helping his fellow laid-off union members with paperwork to apply for benefits. When that was done, he attended college classes at Clark Community College and Washington State University, and went to work helping unemployed workers as a case manager at Vancouver Worksource.

The Oregon AFL-CIO position is funded through the federal Workforce Investment Act. Brennan began March 6 and replaces Mark Warne, who left to work on a union pre-apprenticeship program for state prison inmates.

Sadly, Brennan will be keeping busy this summer. Umatilla Chemical Depot, which is winding down a multi-year decommissioning project, laid off 136 union members June 26. CenturyLink is closing its Hood River call center Aug. 2 and laying off 51 union members. And Georgia-Pacific expects to lay off 100 workers starting Aug. 2 at its paper mill in Halsey, Oregon.

Moro elected to VP post at NOLC

Everice Moro of Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) Local 6732 was elected second vice president of the Northwest Oregon Labor Council. She succeeds Teamsters member Lynn Lehrbach, who retired.



EVERICE MORO

Moro ran unopposed, winning the seat by acclamation.

NOLC is the largest central labor council in the state, representing more than 48,000 members of 108 unions in Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, and Columbia counties.

Jenny Gray, a member of Bakers Local 114, was elected by acclamation as reading clerk.

Both Gray and Moro will be sworn in at the next delegates' meeting July 22. Terms are for three years.

Labor Council calls on congressional delegation to oppose fast-tracking TPP

Delegates to the Northwest Oregon Labor Council (NOLC) voted unanimously June 24 to send a letter to Oregon's Democratic Congressional delegation expressing concern about the ongoing lack of transparency in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) free trade negotiations and its potential negative impact on jobs in the state. The labor council also is asking that they oppose fast-track "trade promotion authority," which only allows for an up or down vote, with no changes to the treaty.

The NAFTA-style trade agreement with 11 Pacific Rim countries is en route to completion. At the end of a May 15-24 session in Peru, trade negotiators said they expect the treaty to be concluded in October. The next meeting takes place July 15-25 in Malaysia, with a final meeting slated in September.

The participating countries are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States, and Vietnam. About half the countries already have trade agreements with the United States.

"Oregonians deserve the right to know what has been proposed in our names and to be able to comment on specific draft texts prior to negotiations being concluded," wrote NOLC Executive Secretary Bob Tackett. "Offering Congress only a take-it-or-leave-it vote on a package that the

public is unable to review until after the pact is signed and negotiations completed is a completely inappropriate way to create public policy that affects so many aspects of our economy and society."

The letter continued:

"In December, Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley wrote to the President suggesting a number of commonsense measures that could help transform the TPP into a tool for net export growth and job creation. We ask that you please use whatever access you have to draft TPP negotiating texts to answer questions about the issues they raised six months ago:

"Does the TPP's government procurement chapter in any way restrict 'Buy American' and 'Buy Local' public procurement policies at the federal or sub-federal level, or otherwise restrict efforts to use taxpayer funds to prioritize job creation in our state?"

"Is there an across-the-board Rule of Origin requirement for the TPP, and if not, at what levels have Rules of Origin been set for various products of particular concern to our state, such as electronic integrated circuits, processors and controllers; photovoltaic cells; trucks; and civilian aircraft? And how do these levels compare with the Rules of Origin already found in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Australia Free Trade Agreement, Chile Free Trade Agreement, Singapore Free Trade Agree-

ment, and Peru Free Trade Agreement, to which certain TPP partners are already a party?"

"What safeguards have been included in the TPP to safeguard against currency manipulation?"

"What have countries like Vietnam, Brunei and Malaysia — and, for that matter, the United States — agreed to in terms of enforceable labor rights standards? Does the TPP's labor chapter enable enforcement of the core International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions, with all their specificity and jurisprudence, or is it based instead upon the much more vague ILO Declaration?"

"Does the TPP include investor-state dispute resolution, which acts as an additional incentive for companies to locate employment overseas? How are the terms 'investment' and 'expropriation' defined?"

"Does the TPP's financial service chapter in any way handcuff the federal government's ability or the State of Oregon's ability to implement regulations designed to reign in abuses by the financial sector?"

"These are among the questions about the TPP that our members are asking, and feel we are entitled to review text on before negotiations conclude and changes become all but impossible. We look forward to your best answers on these questions, and on our request that you please oppose Fast Track legislation."



James Coon



Raymond Thomas



Cynthia Newton



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