



### Keys to a new motorcycle

Christine Smith, a member of International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 28, gets the keys to her new Harley-Davidson motorcycle from Jamie Anderson, sales manager at Columbia Harley-Davidson. Smith, of Milwaukie, Oregon, was the big winner at the 11th annual Unions for Kids motorcycle poker run held June 8 in and around Portland. The event is a fundraiser for Doernbecher Children's Hospital, with most of the money is raised through a raffle for a new motorcycle. This year Unions for Kids donated a record \$64,000 to Doernbecher. Unions for Kids is a nonprofit and all-volunteer organization, with 100 percent of proceeds going to the kids at Doernbecher. Since its inception, the Poker Run has donated \$390,000 to the hospital.

# Columbia River Crossing: Dead in the water

After eight years and over \$170 million spent on engineering and planning, the Columbia River Crossing project is dead, along with its promise of four to five years of employment for thousands of construction workers.

The plan was to have replaced the I-5 bridge over the Columbia River and upgraded six nearby highway interchanges, at a cost of \$3.4 billion. But it fell victim to Washington legislative politics.

Oregon lawmakers voted in March to approve \$450 million in bonds for the project, which was to be matched by Washington state and a much bigger contribution from the federal government. The project had strong backing from Washington Democrats in the House and Senate and from Washington's Democratic governor Jay Inslee. But last December, two Senate Democrats defected and voted to hand over leadership of the Washington Senate to the Republican minority.

Republicans opposed the bridge in part because it would have included light rail. Including light rail made federal transit money available to the project,

which was a necessary part of its financing. But Clark County residents have voted several times to oppose light rail.

Oregon's funding commitment to the project passed as a stand-alone bill, but in Washington, the bridge replacement was one of a series of large projects, including work on state Highway 167, the North Spokane Corridor, and Interstate 90 over Snoqualmie Pass. The total bill for the transportation package was estimated to be \$10 billion, and to help pay for it, the bill included a 10.5-cent increase in the state gas tax.

Both labor and business groups lobbied for the bill's passage, and it passed in the Washington House 51-41 on a second attempt. But Washington Senate leaders declined to bring the bill to a vote, both in the regular legislative session that ended April 28 and in two subsequent special sessions called by the governor. At the last-minute, Senate Democrats tried to use a procedural maneuver to get a floor vote on the package, but were unable to get the votes needed.

When Washington's second special legislative session adjourned without passing the bill, Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber declared the project dead in a press statement.

"Without the funds from Washington and adherence to the project budget and schedule, neither state can incur the further costs of delay," Kitzhaber said. "Consequently, project managers have begun to close down the project."

"It's really disappointing, after all the hard work and effort that so many people put into it, that a small minority derailed the project," said John Mohlis, executive secretary of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council. "I honestly have no idea when it's going to get going again. We're now years and years away from being able to move forward, and it's a real disservice to the entire West Coast economy."

Kitzhaber said he asked the Oregon Department of Transportation to review all of the work on the Oregon side of the project to determine if any stand-alone investments could be made to improve safety and reduce congestion on a smaller scale.

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## UNITE HERE and Hyatt reach national agreement

### Pact provides contracts and process for workers to join unions

Hyatt Hotels Corp. and UNITE HERE, the union of hospitality workers in the United States and Canada, announced a national agreement July 1 that resolves longstanding disputes between the two organizations. The agreement creates a framework for the company and the union to work together moving forward. Both UNITE HERE and Hyatt hailed the pact as a positive step.

The agreement will go into effect upon the settlement and ratification of union contracts by Hyatt workers in San Francisco, Honolulu, Los Angeles and Chicago. Pending approval, the contracts will provide retroactive wage increases and maintain quality health care and pension benefits. The proposed new contracts would cover workers into 2018.

A key provision of the agreement establishes a fair process, which in-

cludes a mechanism for employees at a number of Hyatt hotels to vote on whether they wish to be represented by UNITE HERE. As part of the accord, upon ratification of the union contracts, UNITE HERE will end its global boycott of Hyatt.

D. Taylor, president of UNITE HERE, said, "We look forward to a new collaborative relationship with Hyatt. This agreement shows that when workers across the hotel industry stand together, they can move forward, even in a tough economy. Both organizations deserve credit for working out this constructive step forward."

Last November, UNITE HERE Local 8 and Hyatt signed a neutrality agreement on a proposed Hyatt-flagged headquarters hotel at the Oregon Convention Center in Northeast Portland. Mortenson Development Inc. is asking the Portland Development Commission, Portland City Council and the Metro regional government for a package of public incentives for a privately-built privately-operated hotel operation consisting of 600 rooms.

Under the agreement, workers would be free to join a union of their choosing, and could do so through a "card check" process or through a government-administered election.

The Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council also has assurance that the hotel will be built with union labor.

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