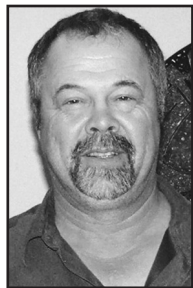


# Elliott named to top post at Machinists District W24

Chip Elliott has been appointed president/directing business representative (DBR) of Machinists District W24. He will finish out the term of Robert "Bob" Wilson, who retired July 1. The term expires in December 2014.



CHIP ELLIOTT

Elliott, 59, has served as one of three assistant DBRs at W24 since Jan. 1, 2011, when Machinist District Lodge 24 merged with Woodworkers Lodge W1. District W24 represents more than 6,000 workers covered under 120 contracts in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Northern California. The district lodge is located in Gladstone, Oregon.

Prior to the merger, Elliott was assistant DBR to Wilson at Woodworkers Lodge W1. Elliott is a 40-year member of Woodworkers Local 130 in Centralia, Washington. After working 26 years as a log processor operator for Weyerhaeuser, Elliott joined the staff of Local 130 as a union rep in 1997. In 2004 he was appointed as a district representative and in 2010 in was named assistant DBR.

A resident of Dryad, Washington, an unincorporated town located southeast of Centralia, Elliott said as DBR he will continue to focus on organizing. District W24 recently launched a nationwide campaign at Jeld Wen. The union is trying to secure a first contract at Bradken Engineered Products in Chehalis, and it still has its eye on 2,000 workers at Precision Castparts, where last month it lost a close election.

The union also is dealing with a strike at Daimler Trucks North America, where 520 machinists walked out July 1.

When the Oregon Legislature adjourned its 2013 legislative session July 8, wrapping up what — for organized labor — was a moderately successful session. With Democratic majorities in the House (34-26) and Senate (16-14), legislators passed a law barring public sector union-busting, closed a loophole in the state prevailing wage law, and approved hundreds of millions of dollars in new construction and infrastructure spending, enough to keep many building trades union members busy in the coming two years. Public sector unions faced a setback, however, when every Democrat in the House and Senate joined Democratic Gov. John Kitzhaber to trim benefits in PERS (Public Employee Retirement System).

# Unions see mixed results in 2013 legislative session

By DON McINTOSH  
Associate Editor

There were several other gains for workers' rights this session, including:

- **Bereavement leave.** The brainchild of Bakers Local 114 member Robin Zimmerman, HB 2950 allows employees to take up to two weeks unpaid leave to deal with the death of a family member.
- **Keeping employers' prying eyes off workers' Facebook pages.** HB 2654 makes it illegal for an employer to request access to an employee's or applicant's personal social media account, or to require an employee to "friend" their employer by adding the employer to their social media list of contacts.

## NO MORE PUBLIC SECTOR UNION-BUSTING

The law the Oregon AFL-CIO is most proud of goes to the heart of union rights. HB 3342, sponsored by Representative Michael Dembrow (D-Portland) prohibits state county and local employers from deterring (or promoting) unionization, and from spending money or holding meetings with employees to deter or promote unionization. It passed both chambers on strict party lines, with all Democrats voting in favor and all Republicans opposed.

"It prevents public sector managers from using public dollars to weigh in

on union organizing drives based on their personal opinions," said Oregon AFL-CIO political director Elana Guiney. "It's none of their business. It's a decision that should be up to the workers."

When faculty campaigned for a union at University of Oregon, the school spent over \$300,000 on outside consultants and lawyers to oppose it. That would have been illegal under the new law, Guiney said.

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## HALTING AN END-RUN AROUND PREVAILING WAGE

A state law known as little Davis-Bacon requires that construction workers be paid the prevailing wage and benefits on public construction projects. Governments are supposed to award building contracts to the lowest bidder. But the prevailing wage law en-

sures that doesn't mean the contractor with the lowest wages: All government construction contractors are required to pay the area standard wage for each specialty, as determined by an annual survey. But several recent projects at University of Oregon had sidestepped the prevailing wage by building with donor dollars from Nike mogul Phil Knight, and then deeding those buildings to the school.

"That trend was going to continue unless we nipped it in the bud," said John Mohlis, executive secretary-treasurer of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council. Closing the loophole was a top priority this year for the building trades.

HB 2646 — sponsored by Dembrow and State Rep. Margaret Doherty — did that, saying that regardless of funding source, if construction or renovation is done on property that a state university owns, will use, occupy, or ultimately own, it is subject to the requirement to pay prevailing wage. It passed 47-10 in the House and 27-2 in the Senate.

## MONEY FOR CONSTRUCTION

Legislators also put money towards new construction and infrastructure, starting with a \$450 million commitment to the Interstate-5 Bridge Replacement Project (Columbia River Crossing), passed in the early days of the session. The project depended on a matching commitment from the Wash-

ington Legislature, however, and Republican legislators there opposed the project, which was part of a larger transportation funding bill. When the Washington Legislature ended its 2013 session without approving the funds, the project was closed down.

But lawmakers also voted to approve bond funding for other Oregon projects that will keep building trades workers busy, including:

- \$316 million for 12 new state university projects;
- \$109 million for 16 new community college projects;
- \$80 million to construct a new state mental hospital in Junction City;
- \$42 million for ConnectOregon, a program of state grants and loans for non-highway transportation projects that promote economic development, including rail, shipping, and airport construction;
- \$34 million for pre-construction planning on a project to earthquake proof the state Capitol building;
- \$15 million to renovate the Multnomah County Courthouse;
- \$10 million for constructing a private hotel next to the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, so long as local governments also contribute, and approve local hotel taxes to repay the bonds; and
- \$5 million to the help plan the redevelopment of the 23-acre site in downtown Oregon City where the now-closed Blue Heron paper mill sits.

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