



NORTHWEST

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Hamburgers, hot dogs, and politicians will be in abundant supply at union-sponsored Labor Day picnics throughout the state. Above, U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley grills hot dogs for union members at last year's picnic at Oaks Park in Portland. Assisting him is Jeff Anderson, secretary-treasurer of UFCW Local 555. Check out the list of picnics at right for the location nearest you.

Labor Day
PICNICS

Labor Day – Monday, Sept. 2

Every year, labor organizations throughout Oregon hold Labor Day picnics. Check with your union local to see if it is participating. Here is a list of picnics taking place :

BEND — Solidarity Day Picnic at Pioneer Park in Bend. 12:30 – 3:30 p.m. Sponsored by the Central Oregon Central Labor Council. Contact Linda Bradetich at 541-350-0965 or Steve Williamsen at 541-678-0235 for more information.

EUGENE/SPRINGFIELD — John Lively Picnic Shelters, behind SPLASH, at 6100 Thurston Road in Springfield. Noon – 4 p.m. Please bring a side dish. SPLASH will be open for families that wish to swim. Sponsored by the Lane County Central Labor Council and Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network. Contact ESSN at essn@efn.org for more information.

MEDFORD — TouVelle State Park, 8425 Table Rock Road, Central Point. The fun begins at 11 a.m. with speakers. Lunch will be served from noon to 2 p.m., followed by music by Broadway Phil & Shouters and Patrick Tovatt. Donations accepted, and there is a \$5 charge for parking. Tables are limited, so bring your own chairs. Sponsored by the Southern Oregon Central Labor

Council. Call Kathy McUne at 541-664-0804 for more information.

NORTH BEND — Ferry Road Park in North Bend. Noon – 2 p.m. Sponsored by the Southwestern Oregon Central Labor Council. Free barbecue, but asking for donation of non-perishable food items for the needy. For more information, contact Robert Westerman at 541-756-3907 or by email at ibew932@frontier.com, or Megan Rivas at 541-756-0579, ext 6311, or email at mrivas@ufcw555.org.

PORTLAND — Oaks Amusement Park in Southeast Portland. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., with a program at 1 p.m., featuring U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley. Food scrip sells for 50 cents. A hamburger with chips is 3 scrip; a hot dog with chips is 2 scrip; chili is 1 scrip and beer is 4 scrip. Deluxe ride bracelets are \$9. All are welcome to attend, whether your union is reserving a spot or not. Sponsored by the Northwest Oregon Labor Council. Call 503-235-9444 for more information.

The Oregon Pacific Railroad Shuttle Train will transport people (\$3 per person roundtrip) to and from Oaks Park from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Parking will be available at the Portland Opera, 211 SE Caruthers St., and in the vicinity of SE Ivon and 4th St.

SALEM — Riverfront Park in Salem. 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Sponsored by Marion-Polk-Yamhill Central Labor Council. Cost: two food items per person or donation to the food bank. For more information and/or to RSVP, call Judy by Aug. 20 at 503-362-7057 or e-mail her at jsugnet@att.net.

It's official — UFCW rejoins AFL-CIO

CHICAGO (PAI) — Citing the AFL-CIO's new dynamism and activism, the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) formally rejoined the national labor federation Aug. 8, leaving the Change To Win labor federation.

The re-affiliation vote by the union's Executive Board, meeting in Chicago, came four days before UFCW's convention opened there.

UFCW President Joe Hansen said his union's leaders realized the "paramount need for more labor unity" as a result of the 2010 election, where labor got clobbered in congressional and state gubernatorial and legislative elections. He said the subsequent attacks on workers brought UFCW into direct strategic partnership with the AFL-CIO and the entire labor movement.

"Our shared campaign revealed a dynamic and revitalized AFL-CIO and made it clear it was time for the UFCW to re-double our efforts to build a more robust and unified labor

movement," said Hansen, who held the top post as chair of Change to Win.

UFCW, with 1.3 million members, was a key component of Change To Win, the coalition of unions — Teamsters, Farm Workers, Carpenters, Laborers, Service Employees, and UNITE HERE — that broke away from the AFL-CIO. One key complaint the unions voiced was the AFL-CIO emphasized politics too much and organizing too little.

UFCW's return to the AFL-CIO follows that of the 500,000-member Laborers Union and the 265,000-member UNITE HERE.

Only the 1.4-million member Teamsters Union, the 2.1 million-member Service Employees, and the 5,000-member United Farm Workers Union remain in Change to Win.

The 500,000-member Carpenters Union left the group in 2009 for independent status.

Teamsters President James Hoffa

succeeded Hansen as chair of Change to Win.

Hansen said UFCW will remain active in Change to Win's Strategic Organizing Center, and will "bring our AFL-CIO partners into collaboration with private-sector unions in an effort to build more power for workers."

In the Pacific Northwest, UFCW locals have maintained affiliations with AFL-CIO central labor councils in Oregon, and with the state AFL-CIO in Washington, through Solidarity Charters.

National AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka welcomed UFCW back, calling it "great news for workers living in the 'new normal' of the low wage economy. A stronger, more-united grassroots movement of working men and women is exactly what's needed to raise wages for workers and rebuild an American middle class. Together we are stronger. It's as simple as that."

PIRG fundraising group
on trial for labor violations

By DON McINTOSH
Associate Editor

In a hearing room at the downtown Portland offices of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), managers for the Fund for the Public Interest testified under oath Aug. 6-7 that firing union activist David Neel was business as usual.

The Fund for the Public Interest, based in Boston, is the money-raising arm of the national PIRG network and its affiliated green groups, like Environment Oregon. Neel, a telephone fundraiser in the Fund's Portland call center, became an outspoken union activist when he and co-workers voted to join Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 7901 in October 2011. But Neel violated some Fund policies, testified Pat Wood, national director of the Fund's Telephone Outreach Program. Neel didn't stick to the script he was given, Wood said, and he failed to "triple confirm" a donor's

pledge. So Neel, a top fundraiser with 18 months experience at the Fund, was fired, by phone, on his way to work Nov. 6, 2012.

The NLRB — the independent federal agency that administers U.S. labor law — didn't buy that explanation of Neel's firing when it investigated. The agency issued a formal complaint against the Fund Feb. 27 saying Neel was fired because he engaged in union activities. Now, having heard two days of testimony, federal administrative law judge Margaret Brakebusch will decide which version of events to believe.

Neel says the Fund offered to settle the case the day before trial, offering a back pay settlement that would have totaled about \$20,000 — if he would waive his right to reinstatement. But Neel wanted his day in court, and a chance at vindication.

Neel is the only fired Fund for the Public Interest call center worker to

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