



Mark Mack, a laid-off master control technician at Channel 6, protests "union-busting" Sept. 26 outside KOIN-TV studios in Portland.

# KOIN-TV accused of 'union-busting'

**Off-camera workers are having a hard time getting a contract from the new owner**

You didn't see it on KOIN 6 news, but union picket signs protesting "union-busting" appeared Sept. 26 outside downtown Portland's KOIN Center, where the studios of CBS affiliate KOIN-TV are located.

About 50 off-camera KOIN-TV employees are members of the National Association of Broadcast Employees & Technicians (NABET), a division of the Communications Workers of America (CWA). KOIN was one of 34 television stations bought last year by Rhode Island headquartered LIN Media. Now in union contract bargaining, the new owner is proposing to get rid of core provisions like "union security" and "dues checkoff," as well as restrictions on doing the work of other classifications. LIN is also proposing that news crews be on-call on week-

ends for no extra pay.

"They want to break the union," said Kathleen McCarthy, a member of the union bargaining team.

McCarthy was laid off in August after 19 years at the station — one of seven master control technicians at KOIN who were let go by LIN Media in line with an industry trend toward consolidation into hubs. The work they do monitoring the quality and accuracy of the on-air signal can now be done remotely, and KOIN isn't the only Portland station whose signal is controlled elsewhere: KATU is controlled out of Seattle, and KPTV out of Phoenix, for example. In KOIN's case the work went to non-union technicians at a LIN Media hub in Indianapolis.

Laid-off KOIN employees say they were given no opportunity to transfer. One who applied for an opening in Indianapolis was reportedly told he would not be "a good fit" with the culture there. Laid-off master control technician Mark Mack told the Labor Press that the move to hubs is sacrificing quality — more technical glitches, and

fewer eyes on picture quality.

The previous NABET contract at KOIN expired two months ago, and union members say the company is dragging its feet in negotiations. Further negotiation sessions were scheduled Oct. 1 and 2, after this article went to press.

LIN is KOIN-TV's fifth owner in two decades.

## ...Food bank

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tain either a whole chicken, a roast or ham ... and for sure a turkey at Thanksgiving.

At its peak, the Carpenters Food Bank distributed 850 boxes of food a month. Most recently it was handling 700 customers a month.

"It's more than 15 million meals," Fahey said.

In addition to the Faheys and Ted Totten, the core group of volunteers over the past 30 years has been Ann Totten, Don Powers, George Socha, Jenny Schmuck, Jerry Schmuck, Jim Berdadin, Lee Herman, Don Peters, and Claude McMahon. All are retired.

"We served people on strike, people out of work, retirees on fixed incomes, young people, families, everybody," Fahey said. "Nobody left without a food box."

# Union retiree can assist with Obamacare registration

Thousands of Oregonian individuals, families, and small businesses began signing up for insurance Oct. 1 through Cover Oregon, the health care exchange that is part of President Obama's Affordable Care Act.

Individuals, families and small businesses can apply for health insurance and get access to help pay for premiums through a statewide, on-the-ground network of Cover Oregon certified insurance agents, community partners or tribal organizations. Cover Oregon officials are urging consumers to work with a certified insurance agent or community partner until mid-October, when consumers should be able to browse for policies and enroll themselves through Cover Oregon's web portal.

One of the trained community partners is Ambrose Bittner, secretary-treasurer of the Northwest Oregon Labor

Retirees Council. Bittner is a retired apprenticeship training official with the U.S. Department of Labor and a retired member of Seattle Plasterers Local 528.

Cover Oregon certified community partners and agents can assist and enroll

Oregonians in coverage, but only insurance agents are able to recommend a specific health insurance plan that fits an individual's needs and budget. Cover Oregon has certified nearly 2,000 insurance agents to help Oregonians enroll.

Customers who want to buy commercial plans have until Dec. 15 to enroll for coverage to kick in Jan. 1, 2014.

If you have questions about Cover Oregon, call Bittner at 503-669-8454 or email him at [ambroseii@frontier.com](mailto:ambroseii@frontier.com).



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