

Operating Engineers rejoin Building Trades Department

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — After nearly eight years since leaving, the International Union of Operating Engineers rejoined the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department on Jan. 1.

“Raising our collective voice and acting with common purpose through this affiliation will benefit not only IUOE members, but all union construction tradesmen and women,” said Operating Engineers international President James Callahan. “We look forward to working with (BCTD) to create opportunities for construction workers and to provide a reliable and highly skilled workforce for contractors and owners. The construction industry and its workforce endured sig-

nificant losses in the recent recession, but by working together as North America’s building trades unions, we can achieve a brighter and more prosperous future for our members.”

Building Trades Department President Sean McGarvey called the reaffiliation “a great day” for the construction industry in North America in general, and the union construction industry in particular.

“With the Operating Engineers as a formal partner, we will better serve the needs of our clients, our customers, our contractors and, most importantly, the members we represent,” he said.

The Operating Engineers has approximately 400,000 members in 123 local unions throughout the United States and Canada, including Local 701 in Gladstone, Oregon, and Washington Locals 286 in Auburn, 302 in Bothell, 280 in Richland, 370 in Spokane, and 612 in Tacoma.

It is the 10th largest union in the AFL-CIO.

With the addition of the Operating Engineers, the Building and Construction Trades Department now consists of 14 national and international unions that collectively represent nearly 3 million construction workers in the United States and Canada.

Business group sues to stop workers’ rights poster

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) filed a lawsuit Dec. 18 challenging the U.S. Department of Labor’s rule that requires federal contractors to display posters informing workers of their rights under the National Labor Relations Act. The 11 by 17 inch poster advises employees of their legal rights to organize unions, bargain collectively, and go on strike and picket without retribution by an employer. It also informs workers of their rights not to join a union or be coerced by union officials.

The employer group asserts that the regulation violates the free speech rights of employers by forcing them to promote unionization of their workforces or risk losing federal contracts.

Last year, two federal appeals courts struck down a similar poster rule issued by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). That rule covered most large private businesses, not just federal contractors.

The Labor Department rules, which have been in place since 2010, affect federal contractors and subcontractors that employ about 16 million workers.

A spokeswoman for NAM told Associated Press that her group is challenging the Labor Department rule now based on the precedent set by the appeals courts in the NLRB case.

The poster rule for federal contractors was approved by the Labor Department’s Office of Labor Management Standards. It was based on a White House executive order signed by President Barack Obama shortly after he took office in 2009.

Obama’s executive order rescinded a prior executive order from President George W. Bush that required federal contractors to post a notice informing employees of their rights “not to join a labor union or pay fees for union expenses that are unrelated to representation issues.”

NAM did not challenge Bush’s executive order.

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