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New mass transit bridge is **UNION-BUILT** Tilikum Crossing, Bridge of the People



Portland-area union officials toured the new Tilikum Crossing, Bridge of the People, on May 6. Construction on the transit bridge over the Willamette River began July 1, 2011, under a project/community benefits labor agreement with construction unions and general contractor Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. The unique cable-stayed bridge with two piers in the water is part of TriMet's Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Transit Project, which will travel 7.3 miles between Portland State University, inner Southeast Portland, and Milwaukie and Oak Grove in north Clackamas County. In addition to carrying light rail trains, streetcars and buses, the bridge's two 14-foot wide pathways will allow people to commute car-free to work, school and recreation. To date, the project has logged 1.8 million work-hours and paid out \$101 million in wages and fringe benefits to workers. TriMet General Manager Neil McFarlane, who led the tour, said 80 percent of the project's 500 subcontracts have been let to Oregon companies, with 16 to 17 percent of those to women and minority contractors. Thirteen to 14 percent of the workforce is made up of apprentices in training. "That equates to 200,000-plus hours of training that is taking place for our future workforce. That's substantial," said John Mohlis, executive secretary of the Oregon State Building Trades Council. Joining Mohlis on the tour were Tom Chamberlain, president of the Oregon AFL-CIO; Bob Tackett, executive secretary-treasurer of the Northwest Oregon Labor Council; Joe Esmonde, a union rep for IBEW Local 48; and Willy Myers, executive secretary of the Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council. Esmonde sits on TriMet's board of directors, and Mohlis is a commissioner on the Portland Development Commission. McFarlane said the bridge — which is scheduled for completion in September 2015 — is on time and on budget.



No surprise: Portland park rangers vote union

Overcoming legal obstruction by the City, rangers are now part of DCTU

Uniformed park rangers at the City of Portland learned May 6 the results of their union election. Want to guess what the tally was? Unanimous: 14-0. Which is exactly what rangers told Portland Mayor Charlie Hales, to his face, when they asked him in March 2013 to voluntarily recognize their choice to join Laborers Local 483. Hales declined to do that, and instead, told them to request a state-administered secret ballot election. After they did that, the City Attorney's office, which answers to Hales, spent 10

months pursuing legal objections. The City lost, then appealed, then lost again and was ordered to get on with the election. The rangers are just glad to have it resolved.

"It's been a long process, and each and every one of us has stepped up to make sure this happened," said park ranger Vicente Harrison. "Every time we step in the parks, families appreciate our presence, so I think Portlanders would be very happy to hear we have representation and we can go to our job every day feeling appreciated."

Seven new rangers have been hired in the last month, bringing the unit to about 23 total. They'll be covered under the City's contract with the seven-union coalition known as the District Council of Trade Unions (DCTU). For a time, rangers thought they might fi-

nally become union members just in time to go on strike with DCTU, which had trouble getting a new contract. But DCTU and the City came to terms, and ratified a new contract in April.

Once the Employment Relations Board certifies the election results May 19, Local 483 will seek to bargain with the City over specific terms covering the rangers.

Harrison said rangers' bargaining priorities include having more say over safety procedures dealing with intoxicated individuals, and getting wage increases to bring their pay closer to that of other urban rangers. Portland pays rangers \$12 to \$17 an hour, compared to \$19 to \$22 an hour at Metro and the City of Seattle, Harrison said.

"Our voice has been heard clear," Harrison said. "We want to be treated fairly."