

Unionized companies Oregon Iron Works, Vigor Industrial to merge

Oregon Iron Works is merging into Vigor Industrial, the two companies announced May 21. Both are big industrial enterprises that employ hundreds of union members in the Portland area.

At Oregon Iron Works, about 250 members of Ironworkers Shopmen Local 516 make products from streetcars to boats to parts for nuclear and hydroelectric facilities.

Vigor, meanwhile builds and repairs ships, particularly barges, tugboats, ferries, and fishing boats. It employs 1,800 workers in Alaska, Oregon and

Washington, including about 600 union workers in Portland at facilities in the Swan Island Industrial Park. When the merger is finalized by the end of June, Oregon Iron Works will be a wholly owned subsidiary of Vigor.

At Oregon Iron Works, the initial reaction of some employees was concern about possible job losses, said Local 516 Business Manager A.J. Blair. But Blair said he thinks the merger will be good for employment, because the combined company will be better positioned to compete for new business.

Portland Metal Trades Council President Bud Bartunek shared Blair's optimism: Merging with Oregon Iron Works could help Vigor expand beyond marine work into things like oil rigs and dam gates, Bartunek said, and more diverse jobs would mean steadier work all around.

At Vigor's Portland ship repair yard, workers make \$16 to \$31.37 an hour,

depending on craft and experience, under a contract with the Metal Trades Council of Portland and Vicinity that includes members of 10 unions: Asbestos Workers Local 36, Boilermakers Local 104, IBEW Local 48, Laborers Local 296, Machinists District Lodge W24, Operating Engineers Local 701, Painters Local 10, Plumbers and Fitters Local 290, Teamsters Local 162, and

Sheet Metal Workers Local 16. The contract expires December 2015.

At Oregon Iron Works, Local 516 represents all production workers at the company's facilities in Clackamas and Vancouver. Entry-level helpers and parts workers start at \$13 to \$15 an hour, while journeymen make \$22 to \$25 an hour, Blair said. The contract expires Aug. 15.

LERC awarded grant to document Oregon home health care workers

EUGENE — The Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) at the University of Oregon was selected for a national fellowship to fund a project to survey home health care workers in Oregon and document the occupational culture of people who have become a primary source of health care for the elderly.

The award is from the Library of Congress' American Folklife Center.

The Archie Green Fellowship in Occupational Folklore will provide \$34,000 to interview 35 home care workers over the next year. The interviews will be digitally archived at the Library of Congress and the UO, where they will be available to future researchers.

LERC Director Bob Bussel told UO Public Affairs Communications that the interviews are expected to yield insights

in the occupational culture of home care work and expand public knowledge of a job that is only beginning to receive greater scholarly and social attention. He noted that many home care workers develop close relationships with clients and often come to be seen as part of the patient's family.

Bussel will lead the research team. He will be joined by Helen Moss, a LERC senior instructor; Nathan Moore, a recent UO master's degree recipient in folklore; and Ivan LaFollette, who will be the team's videographer.

The interviews will be conducted with support from Service Employees International Union Local 503, which represents more than 11,000 home care workers in Oregon.

The project is called "Taking Care: Documenting the Occupational Culture of Home Care Workers."

Teamsters ratify five-year deal at Anheuser-Busch

ST. LOUIS (PAI) — A new five-year contract for Teamsters workers at the Anheuser-Busch brewery in the firm's home city of St. Louis, and 11 other locations nationwide, is a classic "lesson to be learned: It's never easy, but always possible if we stay together."

That comment from St. Louis Teamsters Local 6 Secretary-Treasurer Bob Gartner highlighted the result of a unified effort by brewery workers across the U.S.

On April 30, they overwhelmingly ratified a contract with the nation's largest brewer that will bring the average worker a total of \$24,000 in new wages and bonuses during its term.

The pact covers more than 4,500 Teamster-represented workers at the firm's St. Louis headquarters, and Anheuser-Busch breweries in Los Angeles and Fairfield, Calif., Jacksonville, Fla., Newark, N.J., Houston, Fort Collins, Colo., Williamsburg, Va., Cartersville, Ga., Merrimack, N.H., Columbus, Ohio, and Baldwinville, N.Y.

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