

New leadership at Painters Local 10

Mike Keebaugh has been elected president of Painters and Drywall Finishers Local 10. He succeeds Roben White, who did not seek reelection after his term expired June 18.

Local 10 represents about 750 painters and drywall finishers in Oregon and Southwest Washington. It is one of 14 locals in five states that are part of Painters District Council 5.

Most Local 10 members work under master agreements with the Signatory Painting Contractors Association and the Associated Wall & Ceiling Contractors of Oregon and Southwest Washington. Local 10's president leads general membership meetings, heads the Executive Board, and represents the local at the district council and central labor councils. It's an unpaid office.

White opted not to run for re-election, for health reasons, and Keebaugh ran unopposed.

Keebaugh, 43, has been a Local 10 member since he went to work as a painter for the City of Portland Parks and Recreation Bureau 13 years ago. He's one of five Local 10 members employed by the City. It was a discipline-happy manager that first motivated him to get involved in the union.

"I wasn't getting what I thought I needed in terms of representation," Keebaugh said, "so I decided to show up to meetings and start educating myself."

Over time, Keebaugh became more involved in Local 10, and served as a trustee, sergeant-at-arms and Executive Board member. And at the City, he became a steward, and twice served on the bargaining team for the seven-union District Council of Trade Unions.

Keebaugh said he ran for president so he could serve on the City's budget action committee. He also hopes to get members more active in the union.

White, 57, has been a member of the Painters Union since the late 1970s, starting with Local 101 in Eureka, California, and transferring to Local 10 in 2000 when he moved to the Portland area to be near his mother.

"I feel if you're in a union, it's your responsibility to be active in it," White said.

White was elected Local 10 president in 2010 to serve the remainder of the term of Bob Potter, who resigned. He was re-elected in 2011. He was active in the Southwest Washington Central Labor Council.

White said he didn't run for re-election because health reasons prevent him from working in the trade: He suffers from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and years as a painter may have contributed to that. White plans to stay active in the local labor movement. He'll also lead Food System Care, a native American-led non-profit organization dedicated to improving the food system in Clark County, Washington. White was born on the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation, and is a member of the Lakota Oglala tribe of Pine Ridge, South Dakota. Before becoming a painter, he worked up and down the West Coast as a construction contractor, commercial fisher and diver, paramedic, motel and restaurant operator, and in the electronics industry in Singapore.

Besides Keebaugh, other Local 10 members sworn into office June 18 were: Wyatt McMinn, vice president; Jack Johnson, financial secretary; Mike Bokamper, recording secretary; Kevin Davis, warden; and Brian Meyers, George Ranum, and John Madewell, trustees.

Oregon Letter Carriers collect more than 1.3 million pounds of food

Letter carriers had a lot to carry on Saturday, May 10. Not only did they deliver the mail, they also collected food donations for the annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. The nationwide event is a collaboration of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), the National Rural Carriers' Association and food banks.

This year the food drive collected 1.3 million pounds of nonperishable food in Oregon and Clark County, Washington. In the Portland metro area, 538,208 pounds of food was gathered. Nationally, the food drive brought in more than 73 million pounds of food in more than 10,000 cities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam.

Since the food drive began in 1992, more than 1.3 billion pounds of food have been collected and distributed by NALC and community supporters.

To pull off the event in Oregon, hundreds of volunteers assisted letter carriers in picking up food, loading food into shipping containers and sorting food for distribution. Postal customers were asked to leave bags of non-perishable food next to their mailboxes on May 10 for letter carriers to pick up.

Susannah Morgan, CEO of Oregon Food Bank, said "a food drive this big will help fill the summer gap. During the school year kids have access to free and reduced price meals at school. In the summer they lose that food source. Many families find themselves needing additional food assistance."

NALC International President Fredric Rolando applauded the work done by his organization's members: "This demonstrates the value of the unique postal network, which goes to 151 million addresses six days a week. It also shows the strong connection between letter carriers and the communities they serve — a bond that serves the nation well. Letter carriers see firsthand the needs in the communities where we work, and we're honored to be able to help people in need by leading an effort that brings out the best in so many Americans."

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...SCOTUS rules against unions

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sonal Support Workers Sub-Local 99, told Public News Service it isn't clear yet how the case would affect Oregon's 20,000 state-paid home care workers, who also are contractors.

Sandoval said home care aides were once considered domestic workers in Oregon — paid less than minimum wage, with no benefits, training programs or career ladder. She said that since workers unionized and secured a collective bargaining agreement, turnover has dropped considerably.

"It's pretty dramatic, from where it was to where it is," she told Public News Service, noting that making home care more of a profession is one reason Oregon's long-term care system gets high marks compared to other states. Last month, AARP and two national foundations ranked Oregon third in the nation for helping seniors and people with disabilities remain in their homes.

SEIU Local 775 Northwest represents 35,000 individual home care providers who assist Medicaid clients for the State of Washington.

Spokesman Jackson Holtz told Public News Service the union is studying the *Harris v. Quinn* decision and, at first glance, doesn't think it will make much of an impact in Washington.

"We believe we've had a far more robust collective bargaining model," Holtz said. "We've been able to achieve not just a 40 percent increase in wages, but also vacation time, training and other benefits that we just don't see reflected in the Illinois worker that the *Harris v. Quinn* decision applies to."

"We're going to use this as a chal-

lenge to prove how valuable our union is," said Local 503's Sandoval. "Not just to home care workers, but to our clients and then even further, to the state and the taxpayers of Oregon. I mean, that's exactly what this does for me is, it's kind of a defining moment."

The union argument in the Supreme Court case was that state workers' rights are determined by state law, so the Legislature would have been the place to try to change them, not the court.

Illinois home care workers voted to unionize in 2003. The National Right To Work Legal Defense Fund, an extreme anti-union group whose funders include the Charles Koch Charitable Foundation and the Walton Family [of Walmart] Foundation, then recruited a half dozen caregivers who didn't want to be part of the union to sue the state. A lawsuit was filed in 2010. It was dismissed first by a federal district court and then again on appeal by the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear it in October.

The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation was hoping for a decision that applied to all public-sector workers. But the *Quinn v. Harris* ruling made a distinction between home care workers, which it called "partial public employees," and "full fledged" public employees such as firefighters, teachers and others.

Megan Parke, organizing director for the Washington Federation of State Employees, told Public News Service the union is pleased the court didn't go as far as it could have — but she warns it's part of a battle that isn't over.

"Absolutely, this case is about trying to weaken unions," she said.