

National Labor News

American Airlines agents unionize: Biggest union win in the South in decades

In ballots counted Sept. 16, American Airlines customer service agents voted overwhelmingly to unionize. The tally was 9,640 to 1,547, meaning that unionization had the support of 86 percent of the workers voting. Ballots were counted by the National Mediation Board, the federal agency that oversees union elections in airlines and railroads.

The workers now become part of a 14,500-member bargaining unit represented jointly by Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the Teamsters. The unit consists of staff at check-in counters and boarding gates as well as reservation agents, including 2,300 who work from home. Three-fourths of the agents work in Texas, North Carolina, Florida and Arizona. It's the largest union organizing victory in the South in decades.

The vote stemmed from the 2013 merger of US Airways into American Airlines. US Airways agents were already unionized, but the much larger group of American Airlines agents were not, despite union campaigns going back 19 years. US Airways agents joined CWA in 2000, and America West agents joined the Teamsters in 2004. When America West merged into US Airways in 2005, CWA and the Teamsters joined forces to create the Airline Customer Service Employee Association, CWA-IBT.

Nation's largest pension fund getting out of hedge funds

Buh-bye, Bain. California Public Employees' Retirement System, the largest pension fund in the U.S., is quitting hedge funds, fed up with sky-high fees, unimpressive performance, and too much complexity. CalPERS paid hedge fund managers \$135 million in fees in the fiscal year that ended June 30. They generally charge fees of 2 percent of assets and 20 percent of returns. Calpers was one of the earliest pension funds to invest in hedge funds. Today it administers a \$298 billion fund for 1.6 million retirement plan members.

DOL awards \$10.2 million grants to fight worker misclassification

Oregon will get \$500,000 to crack down on employers who skirt the requirement to pay into the unemployment insurance system, thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). All told, the DOL is distributing \$10.2 million to 19 states. The grants will increase the ability of state unemployment insurance programs to identify employers who either improperly classify employees as independent contractors or fail to report wages altogether. States will use the funds to bulk up employer audit programs and to conduct employer education.

International Labor News

U.S. starts first-ever CAFTA enforcement action against Guatemala for labor rights

The U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) announced it's finally going to pursue a labor rights case against Guatemala, more than six years after six Guatemalan unions and the AFL-CIO filed a complaint alleging that violence against unionists and Guatemala's failure to enforce its own labor laws violated commitments it made under the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA).

On Aug. 9, 2011, USTR asked for a three-member arbitration panel to be formed, under the CAFTA-DR dispute settlement chapter, to address Guatemala's apparent failure to effectively enforce its labor laws — including labor laws relating to the right of association, the right to organize and bargain collectively, and acceptable conditions of work. But the United States and Guatemala agreed to suspend the panel while they negotiated and implemented an enforcement plan, which they signed in April 2013.

Under that plan, Guatemala committed to strengthen labor inspections, speed up employer sanctions, increase labor law compliance by companies engaged in exports, and ensure that workers are compensated when companies close. Three times since then, Guatemala was given more time to implement the plan. But facing pressure from members of Congress, USTR agreed Guatemala still hasn't met the terms of the plan or resolved concerns over the enforcement of Guatemala's labor laws. Since 2008, when the AFL-CIO first made the complaint, UN Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala has documented 30 assassinations of union members in Guatemala, as well as numerous acts of attempted murder, torture, kidnappings, break-ins and death threats.

So on Sept. 18, 2014, the USTR asked that the arbitration panel go forward. If it decides that Guatemala is breaking its commitment to enforce its labor laws, it could fine Guatemala up to \$15 million a year, or suspend its trade benefits under CAFTA. Last year, Guatemalan exports to the United States totaled \$4.2 billion, mostly clothing and bananas.

Stat of the Month

The general public in the developed world, says new survey data from 2012 highlighted in the Harvard Business Review, would like to see a much smaller gap between CEO and worker wages. The ideal gap? No public in any of the 16 major nations surveyed wants to see CEOs making over nine times what workers receive. The U.S. public puts the ideal gap at 6.7 times. America's actual gap in 2012: 354 times.

FREE BARGAIN COUNTER

Free classified ads to subscribers

DEADLINE: Friday prior to publication
Published 1st and 3rd Fridays

Now accepting e-mails

Send to: Michael492@comcast.net

Mail to: NWLP, PO Box 13150, Portland OR 97213

(Please include union affiliation)

- 15-20 words • No commercial or business ads • 1 ad per issue
- All lower case (NO CAPITAL LETTERS, PLEASE) •

Ads MUST include area code *or they will not be published*

AUTOMOTIVE

'04 BUICK CENTURY, 4 dr, white, V6, auto, power windows, locks. 87,000 mi. \$3,277 cash. 503-638-7981 Saturday only
'95 FORD F150 4x4, short wide bed, auto, 5.9 V8, less than 130k, Oregon license exp. 2015, \$3,500. 360-225-5108
'09 CHRYSLER VAN LX fwd, 79k miles, 1 owner, very good condition, \$9,000. 503-336-0231 or 503-320-5724

HOUSING

ROCKAWAY BEACH rental, 3 bed, 2 bath, sleeps 10, Jacuzzi, 5 min to beach/shops; Vacationhomerentals.com/43026

ROCKAWAY ocean front, 503-777-5076, 5 bdrms/2 ba, call for Fisherman's Special. <http://rockawaybeachfrontrental.com>

GEARHART DUPLEX, 2 lots downtown, 2 blocks to ocean, \$395,000. 503-805-4001

ARCH CAPE, 3-lot, 3bd, 2ba, frplc, \$199k 5% dwn, intrst-free for 5 yrs, pay within 10, Google 79810 E 3rd Rd, 97101. 503-709-5335

300 ACRES, or will divide into 100 acre parcels, trees, wildlife, carry contract, Spray Oregon, \$750 per acre obo. 541-468-2961

WANTED

OLD woodworking tools, planes, leather tools, levels, chisels, handsaws, slicks,

APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

International Union of Elevator Constructors Local 23: Oregon & SW Washington

Applications may be requested Sept. 15, 2014, through Oct. 15, 2014, by mail:

Scott McGinty/
NEIEP Area Coordinator
5009 Pacific Hwy East, Unit 18
Fife, WA 98424

Or by email: smcginty@neiep.org

Completed applications must be received between Oct. 15 & Nov. 5, 2014.

Applicants must be at least 18-years of age, and must possess a high school diploma or GED. Applicants will be selected without regard to race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

More information can be found on the IUEC Local 23 website:
<http://iueclocal23.org/>

adzes, wrenches, rulers, chests. 503-659-0009

U.S., GERMAN, Japanese military, aviation, uniforms, helmets, swords, daggers, bayonets, rifles, pistols. 503-852-6791

BUYING US & world coins to add to collection, paying fairly, any amount welcome. 503-939-8835

COLLECTOR, cash paid, old fishing tackle, wood plugs, reels, creels, salmon fishing photos, etc. 503-775-4166

COLLECTOR PAYS cash for older toys, oil paintings, American art pottery, and costume jewelry. 503-703-5952

MOTORCYCLES running or not, boats, tractors, trailers, lawn mowers, car and bike magazines, cash paid. 503-880-8183

SPORTING GOODS

GOLF CLUBS, left-hand TopFlite Tour, 3-PW, 17 & 21 degree hybrids, SW, putter, \$35. 503-522-6542

BOAT LOADER EIDE, electric, \$150; transom wheels set, \$75. 503-929-6898
503 929 6898

FOR THE HOME

STACKED WASHER dryer. 503-774-2171

Broadway Floral

for the BEST flowers call
503-288-5537

1638 NE Broadway, Portland



We Shop the Insurance Companies for You!

We'll find the right coverage at the best price for all your personal insurance needs.

- Independent agency
- Fully union owned by Teamsters Federal Credit Union

Insurance Agency

503-251-2398

Toll Free 866-312-2399

www.cuinsuranceagency.com