

# ...Oregon Highlights and Top Stories of 2014

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raise, followed by annual raises matching inflation. Laborers Local 483 got the same terms in a Metro contract for 500 workers at the **Oregon Zoo** and regional parks, except it got 2.5 percent the first year, and it got some new rights for temporary workers.

Meanwhile, in the private sector:

- 600 workers at **NW Natural** got a rejiggered wage scale with one-time increases averaging 7.8 percent, plus at least 3 percent in the remaining four years — and a no-layoff guarantee — in a new five-and-a-half-year deal with Office and Professional Employees Local 11.

- 570 support workers at **Legacy Emanuel** got wage increases of 2.5 percent a year in a new three-year contract with Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 49.

- 300 hospital support workers, members of SEIU Local 49, went on strike two days in October at for-profit **McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center** in Springfield, but were still without contract at year's end — a year after their old contract expired.

## JOBS

Unions fought to defend and expand work for members, but had some disappointments over the course of the year. On Jan. 8, the Port of Portland

withdrew plans to develop a deep water marine terminal on **West Hayden Island**. In February — after the Washington Legislature failed to act on providing its share of the funding for an **Interstate 5 replacement bridge** — a proposal by Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber for an “Oregon-only” project failed to win majority support in the state Senate. And in August, the Oregon Department of State Lands denied a removal-fill permit for the proposed **Coyote Island coal terminal** at the Port of Morrow near Boardman in Eastern Oregon.

Repeated protests and civil disobedience at the **U.S. Postal Service** failed to stop closures: 82 more mail processing plants are scheduled to close nationally starting Jan. 5, three in Oregon.

On the plus side, construction employment continues to pick up, and in October, **Vigor Industrial** completed installation of North America's largest floating dry dock on Swan Island, with the promise of hundreds of good union jobs repairing and maintaining large cruise and cargo ships.

And in February, **Parkrose School District** rejected plans by the district superintendent to outsource bus operations, after an energetic community campaign by Oregon School Employees Association.

## POLITICS

No game-changing labor-related legislation passed in the Oregon Legislature's month-long legislative session in February. But in May, Portland unions helped defeat a badly-written **Water District** ballot initiative drawn up by big polluters and water users. And in July, Eugene became the second Oregon city to pass a requirement that employers provide **paid sick leave**. 2014 was also the year organized labor dodged a bullet (or at least a very expensive defense campaign) when Gov. Kitzhaber persuaded backers to withdraw a “**right-to-work**” ballot measure that would have made union dues strictly optional for public sector workers — in exchange for labor dropping ballot measures that would have raised taxes on big corporations and the wealthy.

In the November general election, labor helped defeat a “**top-two primary**” measure placed on the ballot by millionaires and billionaires, and helped add Democrats in the state house and senate, a victory that holds great promise for pro-worker legislation in 2015.

Labor also got involved early on to re-elect Democrat **Jeff Merkley** as U.S. Senator from Oregon. Merkley, who proved to be a real voice for working people in the Senate, easily defeated his Republican challenger.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

There's also a side to local labor that doesn't get much fanfare though it goes on throughout the year: building a better community through voluntarism and charitable giving. In 2014, there were many examples locally. Members of **Iron Workers Local 29** volunteered to build an indoor practice facility for Oregon City High School baseball programs. Bowlers from 13 unions raised \$11,000 for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Union letter carriers collected 1.3 million pounds of food in Oregon and Southwest Washington in **National Association of Letter Carriers'** annual food drive. Some 279 motorcycle riders raised \$75,000 for Doernbecher Children's Hospital through the **Unions for Kids** motorcycle poker run and chili cook-off, and a second motorcycle poker run organized by local **Machinists** raised nearly \$3,500 for Guide Dogs of America. Over 300 union volunteers led by **Oregon School Employees Association** prepared and handed out more than 40,000 children's books to school districts and nonprofits in east Multnomah County. And 100 volunteers helped 300 children of unemployed parents pick three gifts each at the annual “Presents from Partners” holiday party put on by **Labor's Community Service Agency** and the **Northwest Oregon Labor Council**.

## GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

The local labor movement lost a number of prominent figures in 2014, including AFSCME Local 3327 president **Steven Fritz**, husband of Portland Commissioner Amanda Fritz, killed in a car crash Sept. 24. The list also includes notable labor union retirees: former Oregon AFL-CIO political director **Lloyd Knudsen**; former Iron Workers Local 29 business manager **Tom Worley**; Albany barber and longtime United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 555 member **Garner Pool**; Carpenters business agent **Jerry Krahn**; UFCW Local 555 union rep **Jim Zuffrea**; IBEW Local 48 officer **Phil Parker**; Pacific Northwest labor historian **Ed Beechert**; Machinists union rep **Jerry Greer**; United Auto Workers activist **Ralph Rigdon**; and University of Oregon Labor Education and Research Center professor **Jim Gallagher**. We ask that you remember them and their dedication to the labor movement. In the words of union martyr Joe Hill: “Don't mourn. Organize.” That same slogan — “Don't Mourn. Organize.” — could be applied to the year that ended Dec. 31. If 2014 wasn't all that we hoped, let's not lick our wounds, but commit in 2015 to organize and fight together for a better life for working people.

## This is what a Labor of Love looked like in 2014



## this is who made it happen

Compassionate support and generous donations from the greater Portland organized labor family made the **2014 PRESENTS FROM PARTNERS HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE AND PARTY** for children of out-of-work families the biggest, brightest, and best ever!



Because of local labor organizations, leaders, and members, along with community partners and labor-supportive businesses, nearly 300 kids and their grateful parents enjoyed a joyous celebration of holiday generosity, union style.

## and this is our heartfelt Thanks to YOU!

In Solidarity,  
Labor's Community Service Agency, Inc. - a partnership of United Way of the Columbia-Willamette,  
and the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, AFL-CIO