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Executives from TNT Development sign an iron beam as members of Iron Workers Local 29 look on.

Portland skyline changes with topping out of 30-story high-rise

Union workers get high praise from contractors, developer of Park Avenue West

By Michael Gutwig
Editor & Manager

Members of Iron Workers Local 29 were surrounded by media and local dignitaries Feb. 19 for a topping out ceremony at Park Avenue West, a 546,000-square-foot building that features 13 floors of office space, 15 floors of apartments, and two floors of retail space.

At 504 feet, the 30-story union-built tower is the tallest structure erected in downtown Portland since the 1980s, said Mark Parsons, superintendent for general contractor Hoffman Construction. "This is the kind of thing that makes our country strong," Parsons said.

The high rise will reach peak employment of 300 construction workers later this month.

The project also supported over 50,000 work-hours at Fought & Co., a steel fabricator signatory with Iron Workers Shopmen's Local 516. According to Larry Dykier of Fought, workers fabricated roughly 3,527 tons of struc-

tural steel and delivered 23,000 pieces to the project in 400 loads.

Seventy-eight union ironworkers had a hand in putting those pieces together — using 63,000 bolts. They placed the last beam Feb. 19 at the topping out ceremony.

"The Iron Worker Local 29 guys did a brilliant job on this thing," said Kevin Patterson of REFA Erection. "Everybody went home safe."

As is tradition, workers signed the beam, which is adorned with an American flag

and an evergreen tree, before hoisting it to the top of the

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The final beam at Park Avenue West is hoisted into place during a topping out ceremony Feb. 19.



Local 29 ironworkers James Marble and Doug Green attach the final steel beam to a cable from a tower crane operated by Anson Barrow of Operating Engineers Local 701.

NAFTA ON STEROIDS Fast track fight begins

By Don McIntosh
Associate Editor

The AFL-CIO has begun an all-out campaign to defeat "fast track" in Congress, and a vote on it is expected within days or weeks.

Fast track, also referred to as trade promotion authority, is legislation that would make it easier for Congress to pass more NAFTA-style trade agreements — including the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a super-secret agreement being negotiated with 11 other Pacific Rim nations. Under fast track, when the president presents a trade agreement, Congress must hold an up-or-down vote within 90 days, with limited debate and no amendments.

If Congress passes fast track this time, the consequences could be enormous. TPP has been called "NAFTA on steroids" by its critics. It would cover almost 40 percent of the

world's economy, including Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States, and Vietnam.

The Obama Administration has never publicly disclosed what it's proposing to other nations in the closed-door TPP negotiations. Even members of Congress were prevented from seeing it initially. After U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Oregon) campaigned for TPP negotiations to be more transparent, the Administration let members of Congress see its proposals — in a special room, by appointment, with no cameras, smart phones, or paper allowed in. Yet as many as 600 corporate trade lawyers have full access to the negotiating texts.

Much of what the public does know about the TPP has come from leaked texts made available by the web site WikiLeaks. Those

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Gannett pushes an exotic proposal at KGW, KING-TV

Three unions — IATSE, IBEW, and SAG/AFTRA gear up for conflict

KGW and KING, Gannett is pushing an exotic proposal: Getting rid of the clause on union jurisdiction.

By Don McIntosh
Associate Editor

There's labor trouble brewing at Portland's KGW-TV and Seattle's KING-TV. The two NBC affiliates are among 46 local television stations owned by media company Gannett, which also owns USA Today and the Statesman-Journal in Salem, Oregon. In bargaining with the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), and the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) over new union contracts at

Union negotiators are trying to make sense of what that means. Exclusive jurisdiction is a core principle in American labor relations. It takes the form of a clause in nearly every union contract that says the union represents all workers in a given occupation or workplace, and therefore the terms of the union contract apply to all those workers. Without exclusive jurisdiction, the employer could hire people to do the same work as union members, but who aren't union members, and aren't covered by the contract or its terms.

"They would be able to bring

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