

IN MEMORIAM

Operating Engineers Local 701 member killed in crane accident

Christopher Pierson, a member of Operating Engineers Local 701 employed at Axis Crane, was killed Feb. 17 when a 35-foot beam he was placing detached and pierced the cab of his crane.



According to the Multnomah County Medical Examiner's Office, Pierson died of blunt force head trauma. The accident is under investigation by the Oregon Occupational Safety & Health Administration.

Pierson, 40, was married and had three children (see photo). His widow, Robin, is a stay-at-home mom to Aeri, 11; Owen, 9; and Braylen, 3. The family moved to Keizer from Nevada three years ago, at which time he joined Local 701.

Robin Wicklander, president of Local 701, said Pierson was

driving piles on a retaining wall project for Union Pacific. The accident occurred near the railroad tracks at 301 N.E. Second Ave. in Portland at about 5:30 p.m. Wicklander said he couldn't remember the last time a member of his union was killed on the job.

Delegates at the monthly meeting of the Northwest Oregon Labor Council held a moment of silence for Pierson.

A GoFundMe account has been set up on Facebook to support the family. Go to www.gofundme.com/mpH5h4.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

New Hilton contract raises wages above \$15

UNITE HERE Local 8 has reached tentative agreement with the Portland Hilton Hotel and Executive Tower on a new three-year contract covering about 265 workers. The contract raises wages \$1.55 an hour and maintains health benefits and pension contributions at current levels. If ratified, housekeepers will get an immediate 50-cent pay increase retroactive to Aug. 1, 2014, and another 25 cents every six months, reaching \$15.20 an hour by the contract's July 31, 2017 expiration. Wages for line cooks and hosts are somewhat higher, and dishwashers and banquet bartenders slightly lower. Bell staff and banquet servers get minimum wage plus tips, but have full union benefits and protections.

Management dropped a proposal that it have the right to schedule workers for short shifts; under the contract, shifts have to be eight hours.

Bargaining had been under way since mid-October, but the two sides reached agreement Feb. 10 — two days before a

planned rally and picket.

Local 8 Secretary-Treasurer Eric Van Rossum led bargaining, but every bargaining session was observed by 60 to 80 workers, including the entire housekeeping department, which would come in on breaks to watch.

The union is recommending ratification. Voting will be held

in mid-March.

The Portland Hilton is the largest of four union hotels in the Portland area, and has the highest wages. Others are the Paramount and Benson hotels, where contracts expire this December, and the Vancouver Washington Hilton, which settled a contract last June.

... Iron Workers topping out

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building (by Anson Barrow, a member of Operating Engineers Local 701) for placement.

"This was a dream of my grandfather's for two decades," said Vanessa Sturgeon, president and CEO of TMT Development. Her grandfather, company founder Tom Moyer, died in November.

The high rise initially broke ground in 2008, just as the Great Recession hit. Work was halted in early 2009, which left a huge hole in the middle of the city for

several years. TMT Development restarted the project in 2013. Sturgeon told the Labor Press Park Avenue West is on time and on budget. Apartments will be ready for move-in starting in January 2016. Office space will open in July 2016.

"I really enjoy working with the labor unions," Sturgeon said. "They understand the balance between the business-side and the work-side. They're smart and savvy. They protect their workers, but at the same time they're reasonable."

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MISCELLANEOUS

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CLASSIFIED AD GUIDELINES

Subscribers may place one free classified ad per issue. Ads should be 15 to 20 words, all in lower case (NO CAPITAL LETTERS). Ads *must* include a phone number, including area code, or they will not be published. No commercial or business ads.

HOW TO SUBMIT A CLASSIFIED AD

Indicate which union you are a member of, and send your ad to michael492@comcast.net or by mail to PO Box 13150, Portland OR 97213. We publish the first and third Fridays of each month, and the deadline is one week prior to that.

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