

John Mohlis lands Compass Award from Port of Portland

John Mohlis, executive secretary of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council, received the Port of Portland's 2014 Compass Award April 15 at the Port's "Gateway to the Globe" meeting.

The annual award recognizes individuals who serve as civic and/or corporate role models in the community, and who have demonstrated exceptional support for the Port of Portland.

Mohlis is the first union official to receive the Compass Award since it was instituted in 2006.

In a resolution passed by the Port Commission on April 8, Mohlis was recognized as an "exceptional leader in organized labor with a strong commitment to the community and state."

Mohlis serves on the Portland Development Commission, the Community Investment Initiative Leadership Council, the Management-Labor Advisory Committee, the Industrial Land and Brownfield Coalitions, Portland-Vancouver Economic Development District, and the State of Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council, as well as numerous other boards, committees and advisory groups.

The resolution further states that Mohlis "consistently offers vision, a balanced perspective and a unifying voice on contentious issues," and "has contributed significant time advocating for infrastructure and economic development policies and investments at the state and regional level that support middle wage jobs and training opportunities for Oregon residents."

More than 500 business leaders, elected officials, and community stakeholders attended the Gateway to the Globe luncheon.



John Mohlis (center) receives Compass Award resolution from Port of Portland Commission President Jim Carter (left) and Port Executive Director Bill Wyatt.

Photo courtesy of Jerry McCarthy, Port of Portland

Port of Portland passes new 'social equity' policy

At its April 8 meeting, the Port of Portland Board of Commissioners approved the first piece of a new "social equity" policy to help airport service workers.

Members and staff of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and UNITE HERE have been turning up at commission meetings for over a year to ask for a policy to help low-wage airport service workers.

The new resolution may improve job security for some workers when service or concessions contracts change hands.

When a new airport service contractor comes in, like a company that cleans cabins, handles baggage or helps disabled passengers, the company would have to hire at least 80 percent of its employees from among the employees of the contractor it replaced. SEIU spokesperson Jesse Stemmler said he wasn't aware of any such contracts that are currently coming up for renewal. But the policy would apply when those contracts change hands, as long as the company has at least the equivalent of 50 full-time employees at the airport.

Meanwhile, for concessions workers at airport cafes and gift shops, the policy establishes a PDX Labor Pool made up of laid-off workers from old concessionaires that new concessionaires could tap into for hiring. Participation by both employees and employers would be voluntary. For every individual hired from the pool, an employer would receive an incentive payment of \$1,000 from the Port, with \$500 of it going to the worker.

The Port will also help employers offer reduced-cost TriMet passes to airport workers.

But another element of the draft policy was sent to a work group for further discussion: A proposal that the Port require future concessions contractors to provide workers at least \$13 an hour in total compensation.

The resolution passed 7 to 1, and had the support of Port Commissioner Tom Chamberlain, who is president of the Oregon AFL-CIO. The sole dissenting vote was Eastern Oregon farm owner Robert Levy.

First big raise under Seattle's minimum wage ordinance

Seattle's least-paid workers got raises of up to \$1.53 an hour April 1, under a city ordinance passed last year that will raise the minimum wage to \$15 for all Seattle workers by 2025. The ordinance first step is a raise from the state minimum of \$9.47 an hour to either \$10 or \$11 an hour. At companies with less than 500 employees nationwide, the minimum is now \$10 for those receiving tips or employer-provided health insurance. For all others, Seattle's minimum wage is now \$11, the highest in the country.

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