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INSIDE

Election results	2
Apprenticeship	3
Meeting Notices	4
Classified ads	6

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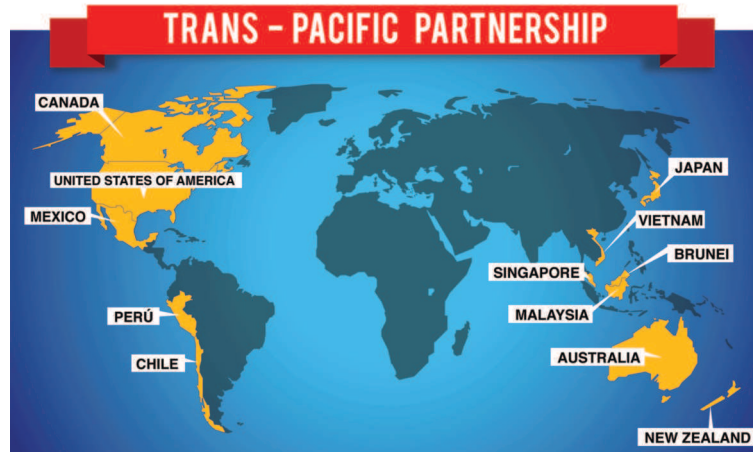
Obama releases text of his Pacific trade deal

The veil is off the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and it's not pretty

By Don McIntosh
Associate Editor

Now that the gag order is off, Thea Lee can speak. Lee, the chief international economist at the national AFL-CIO, was one of a handful of official labor advisors that by law the Obama Administration had to include in the trade negotiations over the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Lee could see initial U.S. proposals — even when members of Congress couldn't — but she couldn't talk about them; they were classified. Now, with agreement announced Oct. 5 and the text released Nov. 5, she can.

“Barack Obama [is] saying



this is the most progressive agreement ever negotiated,” Lee told the Labor Press. “The truth is most of the ‘progress’ was made by George W. Bush, a Republican president. They took that and added some pretty insignificant tweaks to it.”

TPP is the largest free trade agreement the United States has ever negotiated; it would eliminate tariffs and create uniform foreign investment rules in 12 Pacific Rim nations. TPP would marry developed democracies

Turn to Page 8

Portland City Council: No new fossil fuel infrastructure

Commissioners vote to oppose any future oil, coal, or natural gas terminals, or the shipment of oil by rail through Portland

In unanimous resolutions passed Nov. 4 and 12, Portland City Council ended all possibility of large-scale fossil fuel projects in Portland.

The resolutions are a response to a series of proposals to construct marine terminals in the Pacific Northwest to transport fossil fuels. Other local jurisdictions have also voted against proposed oil, gas, and coal terminals, including Vancouver, Washougal, Hood River, The Dalles, Mosier, and Stevenson, but the Portland resolutions go much further.

The first resolution, sponsored by Commissioner Amanda Fritz, puts the City on record opposing any proposed project that would increase the amount of crude oil transported by rail through Portland and Vancouver. The second, sponsored by Mayor Charlie Hales, is a blanket ban on approving any new infrastructure whose purpose is to store or transport fossil fuels in or through Portland or its adjacent waterways. The resolutions don't have the force of law. Rather, they declare City Council's objective, with legally binding city code to be worked out later by city planners and then brought back to Council for approval.

Several building trades union officials spoke against the resolutions, but overall, public testimony was overwhelmingly in support, and several other union leaders spoke in favor.

“Portland's businesses and residents are moving away from

fossil fuels, and we must, because we have been told we have only a little time to make a difference in climate change,” said Hales, opening discussion of the resolutions Nov. 4.

Hales was one of 60 mayors from around the world who met this summer with Pope Francis to talk about climate change. Hales said the pope's message was this: There's very little time left, but it's not too late to avoid a 5 degree centigrade change in the world's average temperature, a rise which would trigger catastrophic climate change.

At the Nov. 4 City Council hearing, climate activist Bill McKibben, leader of the campaign to block the Keystone XL pipeline project, joined by skype from Washington, D.C., where he'd held a rally with U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Oregon) and presidential candidate Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont), announcing the introduction of a bill to halt new oil, natural gas and coal leases on federal lands or coastal waters.

“Portland will go down as a leader among all jurisdictions if it does this.” McKibben said.

But not everyone saw it that way. Willy Myers, executive secretary-treasurer of the Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council, told City Council the state of Oregon relies on fossil fuel — the vast majority of which comes through Portland — to operate transit systems, heat and light homes and grow and harvest crops.

“The negative impact on the middle class of these resolutions, by opposing infrastructure, will be devastating,” Myers said, “and will add to wage in-

Turn to Page 5



Leaders and supporters of the labor-community coalition Fair Shot for All gather Nov. 12 at the Voz MLK Workers Center to announce the group's 2016 legislative agenda.

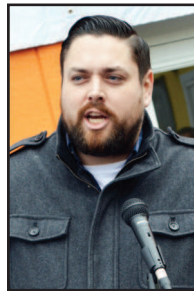
Union coalition gets ready for Round Two

The labor-community coalition that helped pass Oregon's paid sick leave law this year announced Nov. 12 that it will push a minimum wage increase and tougher laws on wage theft and racial profiling when the Oregon Legislature meets again in February 2016.

The coalition — Fair Shot for All — includes the Oregon AFL-CIO, Service Employees Local 503 and non-profit groups like Causa, Family Forward Oregon, and Voz Workers Rights Education Project. Earlier this year the coalition won passage of four out of five of its priorities: besides sick leave,

“Many workers don't report wage theft out of fear of losing their jobs. That's something I've seen first-hand.”

— Sheet Metal Local 16 member Darrin Boyce



that included “ban the box” and racial profiling laws, and a state-sponsored retirement savings system that will debut in 2017.

But its top priority — raising the minimum wage — was stopped by Oregon Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem). It's not clear Courtney has changed his position, but the

coalition will try again when the Legislature holds its one-month short session in February. If lawmakers again fail to raise the wage, the group will have five more months to gather signatures on a ballot measure that would raise it to \$13.50 and lift

Turn to Page 7

Buy union this year?

Union-made may be the ultimate hard-to-find gift, but we've got 10 suggestions on Page 7 for those who want to vote for union jobs with their union dollars.

