

NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

(International Standard Serial Number 0894-444X)

Established in 1900 in Portland, Oregon as a voice of the labor movement. Published on a semi-monthly basis on the first and third Fridays of each month by the Oregon Labor Press Publishing Co. Inc., a non-profit mutual benefit corporation owned by 20 unions and councils including the Oregon AFL-CIO. Serving more than 120 union organizations in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

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Printed on recycled paper, using soy-based inks, by members of Teamsters Local 747-M.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Individual subscriptions are \$13.75 per year for union members, \$20 a year for all others. Send a check for that amount, indicating mailing address and union affiliation, to P.O. Box 13150, Portland, OR 97213. For 25 or more subscriptions, group rates of \$9.60 a year per person are available to trade union organizations. Call 503-288-3311 for details.

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PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID
AT PORTLAND, OREGON.

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Danielson ends 30-years at helm of Insulators #36

After serving a record 30 years as business manager of Portland-based Heat & Frost Insulators & Allied Workers Local 36, Stan Danielson is calling it quits. Danielson, 65, retired Dec. 31. He is the longest-serving business manager in the history of the international association.

Danielson was accepted into the union's apprenticeship program in 1969, after graduating from Reynolds High School in Troutdale. His three brothers all worked in the trade.

Danielson served as a shop steward for many years, and he was active at union meetings. He was brand new to Local 36's Executive Board in 1985 when the business manager's post became vacant. Some colleagues encouraged him to run. With the economy slow (more than 50 percent of the membership was on the out-of-work list), Danielson gave it some thought, and decided to give it a shot.

In those days, the business manager was the only staff member. After winning the election, Danielson recalls his first day on the job. "I was sitting at the desk and I literally didn't know what to do," he said.



Stan Danielson

When he came into office, Danielson said the local had \$5,000 in the bank and \$8,500 in bills to pay. The Executive Board agreed with him to cash in a \$10,000 CD and to assess members \$100 a month. That was on top of a recently ratified collective bargaining agreement that cut wages by \$2 an hour. It didn't stop there. Signatory contractors came to the new business manager and told him \$2 wasn't enough. Danielson persuaded members to agree to cut another \$5 an hour from their wages in order to survive. And survive they did—with only one strike over his 30 years in office, and it lasted one day.

Today, Local 36 members' compensation is \$62 an hour, with \$42 on the check. The union has increased its membership to 260 actives, and doubled signatory contractors to 16. There are 110 retirees. Danielson said 32 percent of the member-

ship and 50 percent of the contractors were organized into the local.

Contracts cover workers in construction, at the Portland shipyard, at industrial and commercial buildings, in high-tech, asbestos abatement, and fire-stop containment.

The union staff consists of a business manager, an elected business agent, a full-time office manager, and a full-time apprenticeship coordinator.

Over the last three decades Local 36 set several "firsts." It was the first insulators local in the country to create an organizing campaign; the first to form a political action committee; the first to purchase its own union hall and training center; the first to establish a market recovery program; the first to bargain separate contracts for asbestos abatement and fire-stop containment workers; the first to start a pre-funded retiree health plan, and later a health reimbursement account.

"They say it takes a village to raise a child. It also takes a village to build a strong union," Danielson said. "I certainly didn't do this alone."

Danielson also helped establish a certification program for asbestos abatement. Asbestos was outlawed in 1973, but state certification to work with the substance didn't happen in Oregon until 1986. Exposure to asbestos is a health hazard that can cause cancer, emphysema, and other lung ailments, such as mesothelioma.

During Danielson's early years in the trade, he and co-workers were exposed to high levels of asbestos without any protection.

"Back then we mixed buckets of mud that contained pure asbestos to apply to surfaces," he said, adding that he gets his lungs checked regularly.

Danielson is currently president of the Western States Conference, which represents insulator locals in 13 western states. He will serve out his term through mid-2017. He also will finish out a four-year term on the Oregon Mechanical Board, a post he was appointed to by former governor John Kitzhaber.

"I consider it a privilege to have represented our members and their families, as well as our

Turn to Page 6

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