



Journeyman pointer-caulker-cleaner Mark Roddy, left, works with an apprentice to rebuild a wall outside the Oregon AFL-CIO office.

Silicosis hits home

Journeyman bricklayer Mark Roddy was having trouble breathing. Common colds would linger, and lead to wheezing. Last July, when a cold worsened into what appeared to be pneumonia and bronchitis, he went to the hospital in Newport, Oregon, at his wife's insistence. A chest X-ray showed something worse: silicosis.

Silicosis — the world's oldest known occupational disease — is caused by breathing in crystalline silica particles from grinding, cutting or drilling rock, brick, or cement. The microscopic particles are as sharp as glass, and cause scarring in lung tissue. The most common version of the disease can take 10 to 30 years to develop.

Roddy, 58, has worked 38 years on the "restoration" side of the bricklayer trade as a pointer/caulker/cleaner.

"Pointer-caulker-cleaners are the ones that eat more dirt," Roddy says. "In the restoration world, you cut out a lot of mortar joints, and you wear a respirator, but you're always in a cloud of dust."

Today, Roddy teaches his trade full-time at Angell Job Corps Center in Yachats — and he spent 13 years teaching apprentices in Bricklayers Local 1 at its Portland Joint Apprenticeship Training Center. How to avoid breathing in silica dust is a big part of the training, so Roddy teaches students to use vacuum attachments on grinders, and water hoses attached to saws that are used to cut concrete blocks. But it wasn't al-

ways that way.

"When I started in 1978, we were cutting concrete blocks dry with a paper mask at best, and you turned the saw whichever way the wind was blowing," Roddy said.

And there were jobs where even a respirator wasn't enough.

"I relined lime kilns," Roddy says. "Bricklayers will all know what I'm talking about. It's called refractory work. It's horrible work. You're in a 14-foot tube, 100 feet long, relining it with a couple layers of high-strength ceramic. You're in there with a jackhammer for 12-hour shifts, in bad air. I wore respirators, but I was in such high concentrations of dust, that even if you're in a respirator, you're still getting dosed pretty bad."

Roddy thinks all that took a toll. So far, he says, his silicosis appears to be a mild case. He's an avid mountain climber, skier, kayaker, and motorcyclist, and says he's not ready to give that up. But his condition is also irreversible and has no cure.

"My lungs are compromised, and I know it. I feel it. I'm going to have to seek more medical attention. And it's not going to go away."

Roddy says if he has one message for his fellow construction workers, it's this: Take dust seriously.

"I have silicosis from a very dust-filled career, but I wore a respirator, and I was conscious of it. I was not somebody that just put a bandanna over my face."

Over 10K severe worker injuries reported in first year of new OSHA requirement

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In the first year of a new reporting requirement, employers notified the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) of more than 10,000 severe work-related injuries. Another 5,000 or more severe injuries likely went unreported.

Starting Jan. 1, 2015, employers are required to report any severe work-related injury — defined as a hospitalization, amputation or loss of an eye — within 24 hours.

In the first full year of the program, employers reported

10,388 severe injuries, including 7,636 hospitalizations and 2,644 amputations. The reports were from federal OSHA states only and did not include injuries from states that administer their own safety programs, such as Oregon.

OSHA said the number of severe injury cases likely is higher than 10,388 — possibly 50 percent higher — because many small employers didn't report accidents. The federal agency came to that conclusion after looking at injury claim numbers provided by state workers' compensation programs.

OSHA said in many instances small and mid-sized employers simply were unaware of the new requirements. In other cases, employers chose not to report because they perceived the cost of not reporting to be low. The penalty for not reporting a severe injury was \$1,000. [OSHA recently increased the fine for not reporting a severe injury to as much as \$7,000.]

Federal OSHA found that most of the reported hazards that led to severe injuries were easily prevented. In most cases, em-

Turn to Page 7

Retired Bakers union member walks to defeat melanoma

Robin Zimmerman, a retired 36-year member of Bakers Local 114, is looking for sponsors as he walks to help find a cure for melanoma.

The AIM at Melanoma Foundation is holding a 5k walk and fun run Saturday, May 21, starting and finishing at the Collaborative Life Sciences Building, 2730 S.W. Moody Avenue, on the South Waterfront in Portland. The event will take participants across the new Tilikum Crossing over the Willamette River. Monies raised will go toward re-

search to find a cure for melanoma.

Zimmerman, a melanoma survivor, lost his wife in 2008 after a four year battle with the disease. "We are working to bring together those affected by melanoma to improve awareness, prevention, and help move research forward," he said.

The walk and fun run is in conjunction with the War on Skin Cancer Screening and Research Expo the same day. Oregon has the fifth highest occurrence of melanoma in the nation

at 29.6 cases per 100,000 residents. Washington ranks 8th at 27.5 per 100,000, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

At the expo, dermatologists will be on hand to offer free skin checks and provide information on how to monitor your own skin, and to offer advice on the best sunscreens to use.

To donate to Zimmerman or to learn more about melanoma, go to:

<https://walk.aimatmelanoma.org/Portland2016/robinzimmerman>



James Coon



Raymond Thomas



Cynthia Newton



Chris Frost



Cheryl Coon



Charley Gee



Melissa Haggerty



Sydney Montanaro

The team at
**SWANSON, THOMAS,
COON & NEWTON**
can help you:

If a defective product causes your work injury you may be able to sue the manufacturer for damages in a products liability claim.

Workers' Compensation
Construction Injuries
Death Claims
Personal Injury & Product Liability
Social Security Disability
Occupational Disease & Mesothelioma

Call us today at
503-228-5222

Straight answers.
No cost for consultation.
Our law offices are located on the MAX Light Rail at SW 2nd & Yamhill.



SWANSON, THOMAS,
COON & NEWTON
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

820 S.W. Second Avenue, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97204
www.stc-law.com