

NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

IN THIS ISSUE

ALL-NEW HOUSE OF LABOR Oregon AFL-CIO will tear down its HQ to create affordable housing. | Page 2

PROUD TO BE UNION – AND TRANSGENDER Oregon's Pride at Work president tells her story. | Page 5

Labor History p.4 Meetings p.6 Clinton Endorsed p.12

VOLUME 117, NUMBER 13

PORTLAND, OREGON

JULY 1, 2016

Laid-off Nabisco workers travel the country to promote boycott of Mexican-made Oreos

In Portland, a laid-off worker delivers a message: The fight is bigger than Mondelēz

By Don McIntosh
Associate editor

Chicago bakery worker Anthony Jackson was laid off from Nabisco March 23. On June 16 and 17, he visited Portland as part of a multi-city tour to publicize his union's boycott of Mexican-made Oreos. Jackson is one of several hundred Chicago workers who were disposed of when Nabisco, a highly profitable and iconic American corporation, decided to make even more money by shifting more production to Mexico.

The story began in May 2015 when Nabisco parent company Mondelēz told leaders of Chicago-based Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers (BCTGM) Local 300 that it



Anthony Jackson (right) lost his job at the Nabisco bakery in Chicago when the company shifted production lines to Mexico. Jackson flew to Portland June 16 in part to join a protest picket line outside Nabisco's Portland bakery with Portland Nabisco workers like Lamar Kennedy (left).

would close nine of 16 production lines in Chicago — and spend \$130 million to open four new ones at its plant

in Salinas, Mexico — if union workers in Chicago didn't offer

Turn to Page 11



At a Boeing contractor in Portland, workers vote whether to go union

About 180 nonunion workers who paint commercial aircraft at the Portland airport will vote July 7 and 8 on whether to join the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM).

The workers paint brand-new Boeing aircraft prior to delivery to Boeing customers — in a pair of aircraft hangars that Boeing leases from the Port of Portland. And they work alongside about a dozen Boeing employees. But they themselves are not Boeing employees.

Instead, they work for a subcontractor called Commercial

Aircraft Painting Services (CAPS), which is listed in Oregon corporate records as owned by Paul and Rhona-Joy Lubomirski. Paul Lubomirski owns a similar company in Louisiana known as Aviation Exteriors, Inc. (AvEx).

IAM represents about 30,000 Boeing workers, but in recent years the company has shifted work to contractors and non-union locations.

At CAPS, employees work four or five 12-hour shifts a week with a one-hour unpaid

Turn to Page 9

WORKERS RIGHTS

Cancer survivor who was fired for medical marijuana is back on the job in Lane County

Thanks to Oregon AFSCME, a Lane County IT worker is back on the job six months after he was fired for off-the-clock use of marijuana.

Michael Hirsch, 60, was terminated two days before Christmas because his urine tested positive for marijuana.

But that's because, on the advice of a doctor, he'd been using it at night to deal with pain and cramping from having undergone chemotherapy and radiation for stage 3 prostate cancer. As detailed in a June 13 arbitrator's ruling, there was never any complaint about Hirsch's performance as a senior programmer and systems analyst for the county, nor any sign he was impaired on Nov. 12, 2015, the day he was ordered to take the drug test.

That day, according to Lane

County attorneys, Hirsch was five to 10 minutes late to an off-site diversity training, and he



Michael Hirsch

walked by him and noticed the smell of burnt marijuana on his clothes.

"It was the smell on my fleece jacket," Hirsch tells the Labor Press. "Apparently that material holds smells, and I had worn it outside when I took my medicine, so the smell stuck to it."

The trainer called county HR, which ordered that Hirsch be removed from the training and drug-tested. Six weeks later, he was terminated for the positive test result.

At his union grievance arbitration hearing, co-workers testified that Hirsch acted normally before the training and participated normally once he was there. There was no safety issue, and no prior offense.

"The fact is I was never impaired at work, and they would admit that," Hirsch says. But past cases had not gone well for employees who made that defense. Even though marijuana is now legal in Oregon for both medical and recreational use, case law continues to preserve employers' rights to fire work-

Turn to Page 9

Cure for corporate medicine: A doctors' union contract

Doctors who unionized to fight outsourcing at PeaceHealth in Eugene now have a first contract

Doctors at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart hospital in Springfield, Oregon, thought they'd be carrying picket signs June 23. Instead, that day they wrapped up a unanimous vote to approve their first-ever union contract.

The agreement preserves benefits, raises pay 4 percent, and sets performance bonuses for things like avoiding patient readmission. But the union effort was never about the money, says Sacred Heart doctor David Schwartz, president of the Pacific Northwest Hospital Medi-

cine Association. PNHMA — also known as American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Local 6552 — was formed to fight outsourcing and give hospital doctors greater say over the quality of care. In early 2014, PeaceHealth Sacred Heart administrators announced plans to outsource the hospital's 36 doctors to a management company that would become their employer. About a third of them quit. The rest joined a union.

"We didn't want to end up working for one of these management companies that was only interested in squeezing out a profit," Schwartz said. "We

Turn to Page 10