

Portland School District agrees to lead testing for all workers

The Portland School Board on June 21 approved a budget for 2016-17 that includes up to \$250,000 to make free lead testing available to any Portland Public School (PPS) school worker who requests it.

The new funding comes from an agreement made between the district and leaders of four unions representing school workers at PPS over the course of two meetings—the school board meeting on June 14, and a district and employee stakeholder meeting on June 16. Showing a united front on issues of safety, accountability, and trust, the union leaders confronted the board about two major issues.

The first issue: Lead testing results had been held secret from employees, as well as the public, degrading trust and potentially endangering students, faculty, and staff.

The second issue: The District had been refusing to pay for lead

testing for school employees not currently assigned to Creston or Rose City Park schools.

At the stakeholder meeting, PPS Superintendent Carole Smith and management agreed to open lines of communication on vital issues, including health and safety, with unions and school workers; and to provide free lead testing to any school worker who requests it, regardless of their worksite.

Taking part in the discussions were representatives from Portland Federation of School Professionals, Local 111, AFT-Oregon; the Portland Association of Teachers, Oregon Education Association; Service Employees Local 503; School Employees Union Local 140; and the District Council of Unions.

“I’m pleased that we’ve reached an agreement that will improve the peace of mind and safety of workers who are dealing with this situation,” said Belinda Reagan, president of Local 111.

... A doctors’ union contract

From Page 1

wanted to have a say in how medicine is practiced.”

The new union contract bars the hospital from outsourcing their jobs. And it sets up a committee of three doctors and three administrators which will meet regularly to discuss patient loads and staffing levels. Any significant changes to work load or working conditions will have to be approved by a majority of the committee.

Schwartz says it took solidarity — and the threat of a picket line — to get agreement. PNHMA became part of a coalition of Sacred Heart unions — Service Employees Local 49, Operating Engineers Local 701, and Oregon Nurses Association (a fellow AFT affiliate). They attended each other’s contract bargaining sessions, wore each other’s stickers on days of action, and supported each other in other ways.

By June it became clear PeaceHealth managers were dragging out negotiations with the doctors. Management negotiators were scheduling sessions farther and farther apart, and walked out of a June 7 bargaining session when observers from other unions showed up.

The following day, PNHMA announced that doctors would picket outside the hospital on June 23. Management returned to the bargaining table almost immediately and by June 14, the two sides had a tentative agreement. Now ratified, the contract runs through October 2017.

PNHMA isn’t the only union representing doctors in the United States, but it may be the only one representing just doctors who are employees of a hospital. It’s unusual enough that their struggle was written about in the New York Times. Schwartz says he’s gotten calls from doctors around the country who are interested in unionizing.

“Anyone who works in health care is fed up with how corporate it has become,” Schwartz said. “Decisions on how hospitals are run are being taken away from physicians, nurses, CNAs, pharmacists, technicians — the ones who actually know how to do the job — and are increasingly in the hands of people who have business degrees, who say you need to maximize profits, minimize expenses. But they’re so far removed from what we actually do that they don’t understand what is good health care.”

UNION DEMOCRACY

New leadership at Machinists District Lodge W24

Noel Willet succeeds Chip Elliott as Directing Business Rep

Chip Elliott has retired mid-term as president/ directing business representative (DBR) of Machinists District W24. He will be succeeded by Assistant DBR Noel Willet, effective July 1.

Machinists District Lodge 24 and Woodworkers District Lodge W1 merged in January 2011 to create Machinists District W24.

Elliott, 62, is a resident of Dryad, Washington, an unincorporated town southeast of Centralia. He is a 43-year member of Woodworkers Local



Chip Elliott

130 in Centralia. After working 26 years as a log processor operator for Weyerhaeuser, in 1997 he joined the staff of Local 130 as a union rep. In 2004 he was appointed as a district representative for Woodworkers Lodge W1, and in 2010 he was named assistant DBR. He served as one of three assistant DBRs at Machinists District W24 following the merger. He was appointed to the District’s top post in July 2013 to finish out the term of Robert Wilson, who retired. He was elected to a full term in December 2014.

Willet, 57, has been a union member for 38 years. He comes from a union family—his father and grandfather were Operating Engineers who helped build the Astoria-Megler Bridge.

Willet started working for Weyerhaeuser in 1978 and was a member of Woodworkers Local W2 in Aberdeen, Wash. [Local W2 has since merged into Local W130.] Over the years he has held several positions in the Local, including president.

Woodworkers Lodge W1 appointed him as a business rep and organizer in 2007. He held the same title when W1 merged with the Machinists.

Willet was elected assistant DBR in December 2014. He now will finish out the remainder of Elliott’s term, which expires in December 2018.

Willet currently serves as a delegate to the Oregon Machinists Council. He also is co-chair of the Nelson Trust Healthcare Plan and he’s a vice president on the Oregon AFL-CIO Executive Board.

Willet lives in rural Grays Harbor County, Washington, with his wife Shelley, who works in law enforcement. They have been married for nearly 32 years, and have a son who is a maintenance mechanic in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

“I look forward to the challenge of leading this District and representing our members,” Willet said. “The District will continue to evolve in the next few years as business reps retire and new reps come on board. My primary focus will be improving our service to our members, organizing new members, engaging our members through mentoring, and increased involvement within our communities. It is vital that we organize new members.”

One of his first actions as DBR was to appoint business representative Britt Cornman of Lodge 1005 as vice president/assistant DBR.

Machinists District W24 represents 155 contracts serving 6,500 members in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and Northern California. Members work in aerospace, truck manufacturing, automotive repair, general manufacturing, logging, sawmills, plywood, particleboard, pole yards, sort yards, dock workers, tree farm operations, microbreweries, manufacturing of styrofoam containers, prefab homes, and flight training for the defense industry. The union also represents service industry workers in the areas of deputy sheriffs, corrections support staff, city public works department, prosecuting attorneys, church employees, and health care workers.

The district lodge headquarters is located in Gladstone, Oregon.

Everice Moro tapped First VP of NOLC

Everice Moro, a retired member of Oregon School Employees Association Local 6732, was elected first vice president of the Northwest Oregon Labor Council (NOLC) on June 27. She succeeds Jeff Anderson, secretary-treasurer of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, who earlier this year was elected president.

Moro has served as NOLC’s second vice president for many years.



Everice Moro

Farrell Richartz appointed business manager at Laborers Local 483

Farrell Richartz was sworn in June 21 as the new full-time

business manager for Laborers Local 483. Local 483 — part of LiUNA’s public sector division — represents about 1,000 workers at the City of Portland, Oregon Zoo, and several other public employers.

Richartz, 52, is a longtime City of Portland employee. He first worked at the Parks Bureau, then for the Bureau of Maintenance as a street cleaner and dump truck driver. Over the years he served as a union steward, newsletter editor, and recording secretary, and was elected secretary-treasurer, a full-time position, in



Farrell Richartz

June 2015.

He becomes business manager because Local 483 is temporarily combining the jobs of business manager and secretary-treasurer until the next scheduled officer election.

Richartz will serve out the remainder of former business manager Erica Askin’s term, which runs through June 2017, and said he expects to run for re-election. Askin left in March to become in-house attorney for Service Employees Local 49. The Local 483 Executive Board appointed Local 483 president Wesley Buchholz as a part-time interim replacement. Buchholz now returns to his full-time job as a storekeeper for Portland Parks.