

OREGON

Join Oregon Working Families Party, says MoveOn.org

Thousands of members of the Oregon Working Families Party, a union-backed minor party, became Democrats to vote for Bernie Sanders in the May 17 primary. Now the party is scrambling to get them back. To maintain its ballot status, it must have at least 10,825 registered voters by Aug. 10. It got a boost June 16: The online advocacy group MoveOn.org emailed its Oregon members asking them to register as members of the Oregon Working Families Party. "One of the most important building blocks of the political revolution in Oregon is in trouble—and it needs our help," said the email. "From taking on student debt, to fighting for single payer health care, to oppos-

ing unfair trade deals, the Working Families Party is building the movement for Bernie's agenda in Oregon.... We can't let the WFP disappear."

End of the line for union at local Miller-Coors distributor

Workers at General Distributors on June 22 voted 40 to 32 to decertify the Teamsters union. About 80 members of Teamsters Local 162 went on strike Nov. 17 in response to company demands for concessions to match the union's contract with rival Maletis. But the company hired replacement workers, and the strike ended after 16 days. General Distributors distributes Miller-Coors beers and dozens of craft beers, wines and ciders from Salem to Hood River.

Labor legislator Brad Witt gets the nomination of Democrats, GOP, and Independents

State Rep. Brad Witt (D-Clatskanie), a business rep for United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, won nominations from the Democratic, Republican, and Independent parties in May's primary election.



Brad Witt

The five-term Democrat represents residents in District 31,

which includes Columbia County and portions of Washington and Multnomah counties. Witt was first appointed to the seat in January 2005 to replace Rep. Betsy Johnson, who resigned to take a seat in the State Senate.

"I am honored to receive such an outpouring of support from members of all parties throughout the District," said Witt. "The results from the primary election show what our office is all about, representing the entire district and being a voice for all in Salem, regardless of party affiliation."

The Secretary of State's office certified the primary election results on June 16.

Oregon Tradeswomen wins \$650,000 to recruit women region-wide to the trades

Oregon Tradeswomen Inc. was just awarded a \$650,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to expand its work region-wide.

The Portland-based group recruits and supports women interested in joining high-skilled, high-wage construction and manufacturing trades — jobs that were traditionally male-only. Women make up 47 percent of the U.S. workforce, but just 3 percent of the construction workforce.

The new grant, awarded over a two-year period, will fund the continuation of a multi-state Technical Assistance Resource Center — to support region-wide efforts to increase the number of women entering non-

traditional occupations and registered apprenticeships. It's one of three such grants that the DOL announced on June 14. The other grantees are Chicago Women in Trades, and Nontraditional Employment for Women, a group based in New York City. In the West Coast regional center, Oregon Tradeswomen partners with Seattle-based Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Employment for Women and Oakland, California-based Tradeswomen Inc.

Oregon's U.S. Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley and Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici issued a joint press statement congratulating Oregon Tradeswomen on the grant. The grant program was on the chopping block last year, but Wyden and Merkley helped renew its funding.

INTERNATIONAL

South Korean labor leader faces eight years in prison

South Korean prosecutors are calling for an eight-year jail term for the leader of the Korean Confederation of Trade Union (KCTU), an 800,000-strong independent union federation. Han Sang-gyun is accused of traffic and public-safety violations in connection with unauthorized rallies in 2015 to protest two-tier-wage legislation and government austerity measures. Prosecutors claim he attempted to incite violence at a Nov. 14 rally in Seoul when he yelled, "Let's advance towards the Presidential Palace." The rally did turn violent: Riot police cordoned off the streets and water-cannoned peaceful protesters in-

cluding a 69-year-old farmer activist who was knocked down and remains comatose with irreversible brain damage. After the rally, Han took sanctuary for 24 days at a Buddhist temple in Seoul before turning himself in to the police. His sentencing is scheduled for July 4.

The country's unions, once one of the best organized and militant in the global labor movement, have suffered setbacks since the late 1990s, when the government made it easier for employers to lay off workers and hire casuals. Fewer than one in 10 workers is now unionized, the country's lowest level ever, including in the 1970-80s when Korea was under a harsh military dictatorship.

Mexican police attack teachers union

At least eight protesters were killed and 53 injured June 19 when police in Oaxaca, Mexico, attacked teachers' union members and supporters as they blocked a highway. The teachers union in Oaxaca has been leading protests against the federal government's move to impose a national education plan that includes teacher evaluations. Demonstrators were also protesting arrests of union leaders, mass firings of protesting teachers and the freezing of union bank accounts. Since the massacre, protests continue, spreading to Mexico City and to the Guatemalan border, where roadblocks were set up June 27.

CORRECTION

In our June 17 issue we reported erroneously that Oregon Shakespeare Festival would contribute to 401(k)s for workers who've been there over 10 years. That was part of an earlier proposal, not part of the final agreement for the stagehands' first union contract. More importantly, we under-reported the *sizeable* raises stagehands got— \$0.75 to \$1.50 an hour, not \$0.25 to \$0.50 as reported. Over the course of three years, some stagehands will rise from \$13.60 to about \$19 an hour.

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