

# NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

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## On USPS birthday, Portlanders deliver a message

Chanting, marching through the Main Post Office in downtown Portland, singing, and eating birthday cake, about three dozen “postal defenders” called for continuation of door-to-door mail delivery, and expressed concern about relocating the Main Post Office.

The rally was held July 26 in conjunction with the 241st birthday of the U.S. Postal Service.

The postal service has been under assault for years. Over 200,000 union jobs have been lost in the past 10 years as post offices and mail processing plants have been cut and closed. Mail is being delayed. At-the-door delivery is on the chopping block.

Jim Cook, retired president of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Branch 82, said there is a bipartisan Postal Service Reform bill in Congress (HR 5714) that would end door-to-door delivery nationwide in favor of cluster boxes.

“We’ve been fighting for postal reform, but not negative postal reform,” Cook said.

NALC is lobbying for an amendment to delete Section 202 of the bill — the portion that mandates ending door delivery.

Rallygoers also called on Port-



Postal defenders rally to save USPS on its 241st birthday.

land postal officials to hold public meetings before relocating the Main Post Office. NALC said Democratic Congressional representatives in the area have written to Portland’s district manager requesting public meetings be held prior to any agreements being signed.

The Portland Development Commission is on track to buy the U.S. Postal Service campus located on 13.5 acres of prime Pearl District property.

“This is the people’s postal service, and we need to have some say in any changes,” said Reverend John Schwiebert,

speaking on behalf of Portland Communities and Postal Workers United. “So far, nobody is asking us (the people) what we would like to have in a new post office, or where exactly it’s going to be.”

Communities and Postal Workers United would like to have the new post office be close to the current one downtown, if not actually in the same place as part of the new development, Schwiebert said.

“Like Paul Revere, we need to sound the alarm to save postal service,” Cook said.

## POLITICS

### Oregon Working Families Party challenges free-trader Ron Wyden

At a July 23 statewide meeting, the union-backed Oregon Working Families Party (OWFP) decided to field its own candidate to challenge Democratic incumbent U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden: Shanti Lewallen, a former longshore worker with International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 8 who’s now an attorney representing workers in wage theft and discrimination cases. OWFP usually grants or withholds endorsement of major party candidates, but it chose to challenge Wyden because of his support for fast-tracking trade agreements like the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

Thanks to a vigorous voter registration drive, the party will still have a ballot line for Lewallen to run on. State law requires third parties to have at least 10,825 registered voters by Aug. 10 to run in November. OWFP dropped below that when thousands switched to Democrat to vote for U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders for president, but OWFP’s canvass and online efforts brought many back in after the primary.

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