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All-union courthouse project breaks ground



The replacement for the century-old Multnomah County Courthouse broke ground officially Oct. 4 on the west end of the Hawthorne Bridge. It will be the state's largest public works project in recent years, expected to employ over 500 construction workers by the time it's completed in 2020. And they'll all be union, thanks to a project labor agreement worked out in partnership with the Columbia-Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council (CPBCTC).

"We are looking forward to working with the County to deliver an on-time and on-budget project," CPBCTC Executive Secretary-Treasurer Willy Myers told the Labor Press.

Hoffman Construction is the construction manager and general contractor on the project, which will be funded jointly by the State of Oregon and Multnomah County. The old courthouse was built in 1914. It's being replaced chiefly because,

built of unreinforced masonry, it would be unsafe in an earthquake.

The courthouse project will also serve to increase the participation of women and minorities in the local construction workforce. The goal is that at least 20 percent of the apprentices and journey-level workers on the project will be minorities, and for at least 25 percent of apprentices and 6 percent of journey-level workers to be women.

"When it comes to work-

HEELS ON A CONSTRUCTION SITE? MAYBE JUST THIS ONCE.

Leaders who made the courthouse project possible, starting with County Chair Deb Kafoury (left) line up Oct. 4 to break ground. Below, Multnomah County Judge Nan Waller shows what the current courthouse is made of: century-old unreinforced masonry.



force, union density equals diversity," Myers said.

The project also has a goal of contracting 15 percent of the work to firms owned by minorities and women and emerging small businesses.

"I think [this courthouse] will stand as a symbol of justice," said Oregon State Sen. Richard Devlin, who helped secure funding for the project as co-chair of the Legislature's Joint Ways and Means Committee.

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