

At former Graphic Arts Center, presses go silent forever



A massive Portland printing plant will shut down by March 31, terminating employment for 72 members of Teamsters Local 117, and 19 other employees.

Cenveo Corporation announced Jan. 30 that it will permanently close the former Graphic Arts Center plant, which occupies three-fourths of a city block at 2000 NW Wilson Ave.

Teamsters representative Adam Hoyt said the decision didn't come as a complete surprise. At one time the plant employed over 300 workers, but in recent years under the ownership of multinational Cenveo, work has been shifting to other locations, and the plant was operating at about a third of its capacity. In November 2015, Cenveo sold its Portland building and the

3.64 acres it sits on for \$7.5 million to developer James Winkler, and then leased it back from the new owner. Winkler Development reportedly plans to redevelop the block for industrial or office use.

Local 117, based in Tukwila, Washington, has represented the plant since 2014, when it absorbed Graphic Communications International Union Local 767-M. Hoyt said the union will seek to negotiate some kind of severance benefit.

The State of Oregon and Labor's Community Services Agency will also meet with the pink-slipped workers to help them sign up for unemployment and other benefits. Union wages at the plant range from \$12 to \$25 an hour.

Cement Masons

Brett Hinsley called up by international

Brett Hinsley, business manager of Portland-based Cement Masons Local 555, has been appointed international field representative for the Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' International Association.

He succeeds Roger Betterman, who was appointed general secretary-treasurer. Betterman is a former business manager of Cement Masons Local 528 in Seattle.

Hinsley, 50, has been business manager of Local 555 since May 2006. A graduate of Portland's Jefferson High School, Hinsley joined the union as an apprentice in 1998, and has been an active union member. He served two terms on the Executive Board and as a trustee on the health and welfare and pension trusts; he has served on the joint apprenticeship training committee, the NW Conference Committee, and the Construction Industry Drug-Free Workplace Program.

Prior to joining the Cement Masons, Hinsley was a member of Laborers Locals 320 and 483, where he worked at the Port of Portland.

As an international rep, Hinsley will assist locals in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana,



Brett Hinsley



Geoff Kossak

Alaska, Hawaii, North Dakota and Minnesota.

"Basically, I'll do whatever the international assigns me," Hinsley said. That could include assisting with contract negotiations, helping with internal union elections, organizing, and more.

Hinsley's appointment expires in 2019. At that time he will have to run for the position, along with all the other international officers.

Geoff Kossak, a business

agent since March 2012, was appointed by the Executive Board to complete Hinsley's unexpired term as business manager. The term is up in April.

Kossak, 42, is a third-generation cement mason. His father and grandfather were both active members of Local 555.

A graduate of Portland's Franklin High School, Kossak joined the union as an apprentice in September 1994. He was elected to the Executive Board in 1999 and as vice president in 2002. He was elected president in 2006. He had to resign from that post to take the business manager's job. Jeremy Kendall succeeded him as president.

Noah Jones and Cliff Johnson are business agents/organizers at Local 555, which covers Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Huge tenant win at Portland City Council

It's the closest thing to rent control: All but the smallest landlords will pay tenants a relocation fee of up to \$4,500 if they raise rent more than 10 percent or issue a no-cause eviction

comes amid a rapid rise in rents that is fast turning Portland into a city where working people can't afford to live. Portland rents have risen on average 30 percent since 2012. City Council declared an official housing emergency on Oct. 7, 2015, and later extended that for another year. The new ordinance took effect immediately, and will remain in effect at least until Oct. 6, 2017, when the official housing emergency is currently set to expire.

On Feb. 2, Portland City Council showed just how serious it is about fighting the city's crisis of housing affordability. In a 5-0 vote, it passed an emergency ordinance that comes as close as legally possible to rent control. [Outright rent control is banned for now under a state law the landlord lobby got the legislature to pass in 1985.]

The new city ordinance requires landlords to provide "relocation assistance" if they increase rent more than 10 percent in a year, and that causes a tenant to move — or if landlords evict a tenant without cause, which they're legally allowed to do. The relocation assistance is \$2,900 for a studio, \$3,300 for a one-bedroom unit, \$4,200 for a two-bedroom, and \$4,500 for three bedroom or larger unit. The figures are based on two months rent plus deposit at the city's average rent for similarly sized units. The ordinance doesn't apply to landlords that have only one rental unit in Portland, or who live with their tenants.

The emergency ordinance

The ordinance was sponsored by newly-elected Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, who defeated incumbent Commissioner Steve Novick after making housing affordability her number one issue. Newly sworn-in Mayor Ted Wheeler co-sponsored the ordinance. The vote took place after six straight hours of public testimony, including heated opposition from landlords, and impassioned support from tenants mobilized by the group Portland Tenants United. Portland Tenants United — which has been endorsed by Northwest Oregon Labor Council, the Oregon AFL-CIO, and other labor groups — will next campaign for the state Legislature to lift the ban on rent control. Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek has said she's in favor of that.



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