

Photos courtesy of Keep Washington Competitive



(Photo Above) NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center Executive Director Rod Belisle (left) shows one of the hands-on classrooms during a tour of the NECA/IBEW Electrical Training Center in Northeast Portland. To the right, Gary Young, IBEW Local 48 business manager, looks on.



(Photo Right) Port of Vancouver Commission President Brian Wolf (right) talks with Vancouver Energy's Jared Larrabee at the NECA/IBEW Electrical Training Center. Standing to the left is Nate Stokes, field rep coordinator for Operating Engineers Local 701.

Apprentices can benefit from energy infrastructure projects

Energy infrastructure projects are not only an important source of family wage jobs for construction workers, they provide real-world projects that help train apprentices and sharpen the skills of journeymen and women.

That's what lawmakers, port commissioners, and business and union leaders heard during a recent tour of the NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center in Northeast Portland. The center, considered one of the nation's best apprenticeship training facilities, is responsible for training thousands of electrical workers for projects in the Portland metropolitan area, and in Southwest Washington.

The tour was arranged by Keep Washington Competitive, a coalition of business, labor, agriculture, and trade representatives that support energy infrastructure projects. The focus was the need for more skilled labor on both sides of the Columbia River, and how energy infrastructure projects can help meet that need.

Among those taking the tour were Brian Wolf, president of the Port of Vancouver Board of Commissioners; Mike Bomar, executive director of the Columbia River Economic Develop-

ment Council; Matthew Hepner, executive director of Certified Electrical Workers of Washington; Washington state Rep. Jim Walsh (R-19th); executives from Vancouver Energy, and construction union leaders from Oregon and Washington.

Energy infrastructure projects, like the Vancouver Energy terminal being proposed at the Port of Vancouver, would provide significant training opportunities and apprenticeships for electrical workers and other skilled tradesmen and women, said Jared Larrabee of Vancouver Energy.

"The IBEW Training Center is a world-class facility for electricians of all levels of experience. But they need real-world experiences to fine-tune their skills," said Gary Young, business manager of IBEW Local 48 and a Port of Portland commissioner. "We don't expect other professionals to learn everything in the classroom. We want new doctors to actually see patients and develop their clinical skills. The same can be said for electricians and other people in the trades. We need them to work on real projects, and the reality is, major energy infrastructure projects like Vancouver Energy provide excellent training opportunities."

Buffet-owned Precision Castparts busts union drive in California

Precision Castparts, the Portland-headquartered metals company that's now owned by the world's second richest man, paid a union-buster last year to defeat a union campaign at a California subsidiary.

According to a required federal disclosure filed in December 2016, PCC Structurals human resources vice president Brian Keegan contracted with Labor Information Services, Inc., of Malibu, California to conduct anti-union meetings with employees of Permaswage.

Permaswage is a PCC subsidiary in Gardena, California, that makes fluid fittings for aerospace companies; it's also known as Designed Metal Connections.

Machinists District Lodge 725 in Huntington, Beach, California, was seeking to represent workers there, and on Sept. 17, filed a request for a union elec-

tion. The National Labor Relations Board set an election date of Oct. 21. Then "union avoidance" consultants Chuck Ahern and Miriam Navarro got to work, on Oct. 10. Nine days later, the union withdrew.

It's not the first time Precision Castparts fought unionization; some of its subsidiaries have union contracts, but at its Portland main campus, the company defeated union campaigns in 1995, 1996, and 2013.

Precision was bought in January 2016 by Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway holding company. Billionaire Buffett has garnered great press for expressing concern about rising economic inequality, and some of his companies have unionized workforces. But he's also spoken out against calls for a \$15 minimum wage. Now, a Buffett company fought an effort by workers to unionize.

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- #10 We LOVE to make loans - We make it easy!
- #9 Our rates are better - Saves YOU money.
- #8 We are easy to join - Takes less than 5 minutes.
- #7 We are convenient - 100s of ATMs in YOUR area.
- #6 We are insured - YOUR money is safe.
- #5 We are non-profit - YOU are our top priority.
- #4 You're not just a number...we know our members!
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- #2 We have fewer & lower fees
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