

NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

(International Standard Serial Number 0894-444X)

Established in 1900 in Portland, Oregon as a voice of the labor movement. Published on a semi-monthly basis on the first and third Fridays of each month by the Oregon Labor Press Publishing Co. Inc., a non-profit mutual benefit corporation owned by 20 unions and councils including the Oregon AFL-CIO. Serving more than 120 union organizations in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

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Printed on recycled paper, using soy-based inks, by members of Teamsters Local 747-M.

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...Portland managers want end to union-crafted CBA

From Page 1

the resulting disparity has persisted even after formal discrimination became illegal. Burch calls it the “FBI system” because people tend to find out about construction apprenticeship opportunities from fathers, brothers, and in-laws. Meanwhile, it can be very hard for contractors without experience, or pools of capital, to break into the construction industry.

Advocates for years have pressed the City to take action in order to stop inadvertently perpetuating the disparity. That’s the purpose of the CBA, which was crafted in collaboration with city officials by the Metropolitan Alliance for Workforce Equity (MAWE), a coalition initiated by the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters and Operating Engineers Local 701. The 23-page model CBA they developed, which was endorsed by the Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council, was modeled to an extent on the project labor agreement that was used on the Edith Green Wendell Wyatt federal building



With involvement and support from several union apprenticeship programs, Constructing Hope, a pre-apprenticeship training program, helps prepare ex-offenders for careers in the building trades, and a second chance in life. Above, the group’s board congratulates graduates at a March 23 ceremony at the Carpenters Training Center in Northeast Portland.

retrofit project. In their 2012 resolution, the City Council committed to use some version of the model CBA on all projects over \$15 million.

From a union perspective, the CBA worked for a number of reasons. It set specific numeric goals to increase partici-

pation of women and minorities as apprentices and journeyworkers in every craft specialty. Because unions were signatory to the agreement, they had legal grounds to dispatch women and minority workers to contractors so they could meet their workforce participation goals. Union

representatives also took part in an oversight committee — along with representatives from labor, management, and community groups — to make sure, in real time, that targets were being met. The CBA had real enforcement provisions as well: Contractors who failed to make good faith efforts to employ women and minorities could be made to pay liquidated damages of \$500 per day per occurrence. And a fund equal to 1 percent of hard construction costs paid for “technical assistance” for women- and minority-owned contractors and grants to three state-registered pre-apprenticeship training programs (Oregon Tradeswomen, Constructing Hope, and Portland Youthbuilders) which recruit and prepare women and minorities for careers in the building trades.

The CBA was employed on two Water Bureau construction projects — construction of the Kelly Butte Reservoir and the new Interstate Maintenance Facility. Both were completed using union workers, under

Turn to Page 9

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