

NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

IN THIS ISSUE

SCHOOL LAYOFFS COMING State budget cuts have put 140 jobs at risk at Portland Public Schools. | Page 4

NEW UA LOCAL 290 CONTRACT The six-year deal will raise compensation \$16.03 an hour. | Page 11

Meetings p.6 Oregon job fatalities increase p.12

VOLUME 118, NUMBER 8

PORTLAND, OREGON

APRIL 21, 2017

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY: APRIL 28



Workers Memorial Day is observed every year on April 28. It's a day to honor workers who have died on the job, to remember the suffering experienced by families and workers in all trades, and to recommit to the fight for a safe and healthy work environment for all workers.

REMEMBERING OREGON WORKERS WHO DIED ON THE JOB

SALEM — Oregon AFL-CIO will hold a memorial ceremony at the Fallen Workers Memorial on the Capitol Mall in Salem. The service will feature remarks from elected officials, union leaders, and safety and health advocates, and the reading of the names of the 66 workers who died on the job in Oregon in 2016.

- **Time:** Friday, April 28, noon
- **Place:** Labor and Industries Building, 350 Winter St. NE, Salem

PORTLAND — Northwest Oregon Labor Council will hold a memorial service at its monthly delegates meeting. Delegates will raise an American flag in honor of each Oregon worker who died on the job last year.

- **Time:** Monday, April 24, 7 p.m.
- **Place:** IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland

WORKER SAFETY SPECIAL ISSUE

Every year the Northwest Labor Press publishes a special issue in late April focusing on worker safety and health. Inside this year's:

UNSAFE AT WORK Under the Ross Island Bridge, an ODOT contractor is putting workers at risk. | Page 1

AFTER THE FLAMES The Fire Fighters union is sounding the alarm about carcinogenic fire retardants and household chemicals. | Page 1

SAY THEIR NAMES A list of all workers who died on the job in Oregon in 2016. | Page 8

ARE RED STATES LESS SAFE? States where Trump won have higher rates of worker injury — and more hazardous blue-collar jobs. | Page 15

THE TIRELESS CRUSADER Six questions for Peg Seminario, the national AFL-CIO's top campaigner for worker safety. | Page 16

Revolt of the Managers

At the City of Portland, a group of managers rewrote a project labor agreement template — by taking out the 'labor'.

By Don McIntosh

A group of city bureau managers is asking Portland City Council to scrap a union-friendly template that has increased minority and women participation in City construction projects, which a previous City Council approved in 2012. A counter-template written by the managers was scheduled to go before City Council Wednesday, April 26, at 2 p.m. — when this issue went to press.

Turn to Page 2

UNSAFE AT WORK

An ODOT bridge-painting contractor is under investigation after a 40-foot fall injured two workers. Former employees — let go after they raised safety concerns — paint a picture of dangerous work conditions.

By Don McIntosh

“Next time you have a problem with safety, talk to me. Then get in your car and hit the f***ing road.” That’s what painter Shane Duane Luey says he was told by Abhe & Svoboda superintendent Leon Wagner last June — in front of 30 co-workers. That’s after he raised a safety issue at a safety meeting. Abhe & Svoboda is the non-union firm that won a \$22 million contract with Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to sandblast and paint the underside of the Ross Island Bridge.

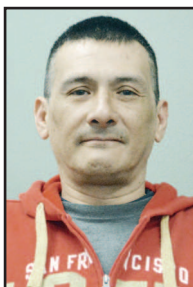
After that public rebuke, Luey felt he wasn’t going to get anywhere complaining to management, so on June 8, 2016, he made an anonymous safety complaint to Oregon OSHA (Occupational Safety and



Three steel arch spans underneath the Ross Island Bridge have aged and rusted since they were last painted in the 1960s. Using temporary support structures and containment, nonunion contractor Abhe & Svoboda is sandblasting and repainting them.

Health Administration). In the complaint, he warned the agency that employees could fall through holes on the scaffolding decks while sandblasting and painting the bridge.

“There was unfinished scaffolding, skeleton scaffolding to get where you had to go,” Luey says. “It wasn’t built properly with levels filled in, handrails, none of that.”



Shane Duane Luey

Two OSHA investigators showed up the following week. They met the project manager and safety manager in the construction trailer, read company logs and safety meeting minutes, and walked around the site escorted by managers. An hour and 45 minutes later, they left, having found nothing wrong.

After the OSHA visit, Luey felt like he had a target on his

Long after the flames, firefighters at risk from cancer chemicals

It’s no secret that fighting fire is a dangerous job. Against the flames, firefighters have their equipment to protect them. But the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) union has increasingly been sounding the alarm about the danger that continues after the fire is out: During the “overhaul” phase of fighting a fire — when fire fighters are opening walls, ceilings, voids, and partitions to make sure fire hasn’t spread to unseen areas — they are still being exposed to a potpourri of carcinogenic chemicals and gases. Adhering to their gear and on their skin, those toxins can go back with them to the fire station and even living quarters.

That’s why firefighters are now being diagnosed with certain kinds of cancers at 20 or 30 times the rate of the general population. Among IAFF members, death by cancer has come to be considered death in the line of duty.

To confront the danger, IAFF has been trying to educate members and promote best practices to reduce exposure. Last June, thanks to a \$100,000 grant from



the Washington Department of Labor and Industries, a group of IAFF members from around the state of Washington released a remarkable video and guidebook: “Healthy In, Healthy Out.”

It starts with how firefighters’

Turn to Page 13

Turn to Page 14