



Annual contest challenges Bricklayer apprentices



Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Local 1 held its annual apprenticeship contest April 1 at its training center in Northeast Portland. Seven apprentices participated for the chance to advance to the Western States regional finals May 20 in Tracy, California. Representing Local 1 at regionals in bricklaying will be Ben Wall (photo above), a 90 percent apprentice who took first place, and Micah Edwards (below right), an 80 percent apprentice, who finished second. Zach Welch finished third and will be an alternate. Josh Graham, a 90 percent apprentice, will represent Local 1 in the marble competition. He was the lone competitor and advanced automatically. Apprenticeship Coordinator Shawn Lenczowski said the competition requires apprentices to build a project from a blueprint in five hours. The project is then judged for quality.



60 percent apprentice Kirstie Reeves.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Plumbers & Fitters #290 ratifies six-year contract

Bargaining takes less than 3 hours, and the result is an increase of \$16.03 over six years.

Members of United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 290 ratified a new six-year collective bargaining agreement March 18 with 80 percent approval. The deal with the Oregon chapter of the Plumbing and Mechanical Contractors Association (PMCA) provides for annual increases of 3.5 percent — for a total increase of \$16.03 over the life of the agreement.

The contract took effect April 1.

As is typical in construction bargaining, members decide how to divvy up the new money — whether it be in wages, pension contributions, or for health insurance. The increase on April 1 was \$2.45. Members decided to put 99 cents on the check — bumping their hourly wage to \$43.82. The full package of wages and fringe benefits increased to \$72.40 an hour. Union members will meet every February through 2023 to decide where to apply that year's raise.

Remarkably, bargaining the contract lasted just 2 hours, 23 minutes, said Local 290 Business Agent Travis Argue. A union committee had met with PMCA officials a few times prior to official bargaining, but when the sides sat down for the first time on March 4, Local 290's first proposal was ac-

cepted.

"It didn't take very long, but honestly, this contract is the product of labor-management relationship building that we've been working on for the last three years," said Local 290 Business Manager Al Shropshire.

Historically, bargaining has mostly been adversarial, with contracts running well past their expiration dates and customers worried about work stoppages. When a deal finally was reached, the sides were barely speaking to each other.

"We decided as a union and as contractors that there had to be a better way to do this," Shropshire said. "Our goal was to present something that we believed was fair and reasonable for everyone."

With bargaining behind them, the focus now, Shropshire said, is to increase market share. "This contract provides a lot of stability for the industry," he said.

UA Local 290 is a multi-craft union with more than 4,300 active and retired members specializing in the fabrication, installation and servicing of piping systems throughout Oregon, Southwest Washington, and Northern California. Its training center is currently working with 400 apprentices, with a new batch ready to enter.

PMCA is a coalition of more than 250 plumbing and mechanical contractors within the jurisdiction.

Shropshire expects the local will be at full employment within the next month or two — and lasting for at least two years.

In Oregon, Nike is in the midst of a 3.2 million square foot expansion at its world headquarters. New high rises are popping up in the Pearl District and in South Waterfront. Hospitals are embarking on extensive expansions projects. Google is adding another data center in The Dalles, and Intel is ready to ramp up again. School districts are passing bonds to construct new buildings and remodel old ones. Portland airport is preparing for a billion-dollar expansion. A new convention center headquarters hotel is about to break ground. Multnomah County is going to build a new courthouse. And the United States Post Office broke ground for a new main post office.

HAPPENINGS

Labor recognition night May 20

The Northwest Oregon Labor Council's 20th annual Labor Appreciation and Recognition Night will be held Saturday, May 20, at the IBEW Local 48 hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

The dinner and awards ceremony serve as a fundraiser for Labor's Community Service Agency. This year is a Hawaii theme — "Lei'd Back Luau." Dinner tickets are \$25 per person. Raffle tickets also will be sold. The labor council is currently accepting cash and prize donations for the raffle.

The labor council also is accepting nominations for persons to be recognized for their service to and with the labor community.

The top award is the Del Ricks Community Service Award, recognizing one individual for their exemplary service.

Nominations should be sent to: Northwest Oregon Labor Council, 9955 SE Washington St., Suite 305, Portland, OR 97216. The deadline is April 28. For more information or to order tickets, call 503-235-9444.

AFT's Weingarten at Portland forum on future of education

Randi Weingarten, international president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), will be the featured speaker at a forum April 25 in Portland to talk about the future of public education. The free event is part of the Wayne Morse Center's Mar-

garet Hallock Program for Women's Rights. It is being cosponsored by the Labor Education and Research Center at the University of Oregon, the World Affairs Council, and AFT-Oregon.

- **Time:** Tuesday, April 25, 5:30 p.m.
- **Place:** First Congregational Church, 1126 SW Park Ave., Portland
- **Cost:** Free and open to the public

Letter Carriers prepare for May 13 food drive

Letter carriers in the Portland metropolitan area and in Clark County, Wash. will help "Stamp Out Hunger" on Saturday, May 13, part of the 25th annual National Association of Letter Carriers and U.S. Postal Service Food Drive.

According to the Oregon Food Bank, an estimated 240,000 peo-

ple get meals from emergency food boxes in an average month. To help, letter carriers will deliver plastic bags to every household a few days before the Food Drive. All you have to do is fill the bag with nonperishable food items, and leave it at your mailbox on the morning of May 13. Letter Carriers will collect the bags and deliver them to drop points, where volunteers will sort the donations and forward them to the Oregon Food Bank. Food collected in Clark County will benefit Clark County hunger-relief agencies.

The Food Drive raises more than 1.5 million pounds of food each year for the Oregon Food Bank. It is the largest one-day food collection of the year in Oregon — and in the nation.