

Building trades, labor council back Mt. Hood CC bond effort

Labor unions are backing a \$75 million bond measure at Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC). The Northwest Oregon Labor Council and the Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council both endorsed Measure 96-120 with unanimous support from their affiliated unions. The measure is on the May Special District Election ballot.

The \$75 million general obligation (GO) bond will fund a number of projects, including:

- Building a new Workforce and Applied Technology Center on the Gresham campus, which would house laboratories and classrooms, and expand the college's efforts in providing applied technology careers.
- Upgrading and improving the college's safety and security infrastructure, including the use of new technologies, and seismic upgrades and retrofitting to protect against earthquakes.
- Securing \$8 million in state matching funds to be used for additional support for the Workforce and Applied Technology Center.
- Freeing up more operating funds

by refinancing existing capital obligations.

An oversight committee, made up in part by community and business leaders, would be required to oversee the funds to ensure they are spent correctly.

If voters approve Measure 96-120, it would be the first time new money would come to the college since a \$6 million bond passed in 1974. Last May, voters rejected a \$125 million GO bond.

For the average homeowner, the bond's impact would be determined by the assessed value of their house — not the market value. The estimated tax rate per \$100,000 of assessed value is \$23. The cost to a typical homeowner with an as home value of \$200,000 would be \$46 per year.

The MHCC campus opened in 1966 at 26000 SE Stark St., Gresham. Today it has a student population of more than 25,000. It employs 1,200 faculty and offers 120 degree and certificate programs.

Ballots must be received at county election offices by 8 p.m. on Tuesday, May 16.

Operating Engineers #701 picket

FILED ULP AGAINST CONTRACTOR AT GRESHAM WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT.

Operating Engineers Local 701 put up an unfair labor practice (ULP) picket April 25 at the Gresham Wastewater Treatment Plant on Northeast Sandy Blvd.

The target of the picket is Veolia North America, which contracts with the City of Gresham to operate and maintain the facility. The plant treats 13 million gallons of water daily and serves 114,000 customers in the cities of Gresham, Fairview and Wood Village.

The three-year union contract for the 10 stationary employees at the plant expires on June 30, 2017. Talks opened April 17 with Local 701 presenting its proposal to the company. Sitting at the bargaining table the following day, the union was expecting a counter-proposal. Instead, they were handed a new policy that significantly changed hours and working conditions for most of the bargaining unit, said Local 701 attorney Nicole Rappaport.

"I said to them, 'you mean proposed new policy,'" Rappaport told the Labor Press, reminding them that they were in the middle of bargaining. But Veolia's representative made it clear that this was not a proposal.

The company unilaterally implemented the new policy that day. The union responded on April 19 by filing an unfair labor practice complaint with the National Labor Relations Board. "We're going to protect our members, no matter what," said Local 701 Business Manager Jim Anderson.

The new policy includes controversial on-call scheduling. Workers almost went on strike over the issue during contract negotiations three years ago. A memorandum of understanding was reached, Rappaport said, but the company didn't comply with it, which resulted in Local 701 filing a grievance. The case lingered for more than a year — until last December, when an arbitrator voided the MOU.

"So now we're back to square one," Rappaport said.

Negotiations are scheduled to resume later this month.



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