

...Nabisco boycott continues

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contract since their old one expired Feb. 29, 2016. No negotiations have taken place since April 2016, but the impasse hasn't yet resulted in a strike or lockout.

Mondelēz has made two "last, best, and final" contract offers, most recently in December, but BCGTM rejected the terms. BCGTM says it wants Mondelēz to bring the jobs back, and rejects the company's proposal to withdraw from the union-sponsored multi-employer pension. Mondelēz is proposing instead to contribute an equivalent amount to a 401(k) plan, because the union pension is headed for insolvency. As of April 28, the Bakery and Confectionery Union and Industry International Pension Fund was projected to run out of money in 13 years. But Mondelēz is still honoring the terms of the expired union contract, and is continuing to make pension contributions, totaling \$21 million in 2016.

Instead of striking, BCGTM has focused its efforts on promoting the boycott, and has sent laid-off workers around the country, first to speak to union gatherings, and now to college campuses in a tour assisted by the national student labor organization United Students Against Sweatshops.

On May 17 — in a demonstration BCGTM called the "Nabisco shareholders showdown" — union protesters showed up outside a corporate meeting space in Lincolnshire, Illinois, for the annual shareholder meeting. Inside the meeting, several union leaders and a laid-off worker Anthony Jackson questioned company executives about the decision to downsize in Chicago. Though Mondelēz reports that sales are declining, the company is still immensely profitable, netting \$26 billion in 2016 and paying its CEO \$16.7 million.

At the shareholders meeting, BCGTM regional vice president Jethro Head submitted a shareholder proposal for Mondelēz to create a



Outside the Mondelēz shareholders meeting, protesting a proposal to replace Nabisco workers' pension with a 401(k). (Photo by Nate Zeff)

committee that would report on the community impact of Mondelez layoffs and factory closures. The resolution did not get majority support from shareholders.

—Don McIntosh

ONLINE EXTRA

This four-minute video explains the union's fight: youtu.be/izlbgNshpvs



MULTNOMAH COUNTY

Labor Council takes stand against soda tax initiative

The Northwest Oregon Labor Council, AFL-CIO, took action May 22 against a proposed "soda tax" for Multnomah County. At the Labor Council's Executive Board meeting earlier in the day, representatives of the Teamsters, Bakers Local 114 and United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 spoke in opposition to the tax, which would be

regressive because it would fall harder on lower-income people. Union officials expressed concern that it would cause the loss of union jobs. A similar tax has been in effect in Philadelphia for about a year. Advocates of the tax will need to collect 17,000 signatures to get it on the ballot. The Labor Council approved a resolution opposing the soda tax and discouraging union members from signing the initiative petitions.

PEOPLE

New leader at Oregon Tradeswomen

Oregon Tradeswomen Inc. (OTI) has named a new executive director — Kelly Kupcak. She succeeds Connie Ashbrook, who has led the group since she helped found it in 1989. Kupcak currently works as director of technical assistance at Chicago Women in Trades. At Chicago Women in Trades, Kupcak managed a 10-state multi-year initiative and a national U.S. Department of Labor contract to improve outcomes for women in nontraditional sectors through technical assistance to employers, registered apprenticeship programs, and



Kelly Kupcak

government agencies. Ashbrook will continue to be involved with OTI as an advisor. Kupcak will start at OTI July 10, 2017.

Barbara Byrd retires from University of Oregon LERC

After 22 years, labor educator Barbara Byrd is retiring from the University of Oregon Labor Education and Research Center (LERC), which she currently serves as Portland Center Coordinator. Byrd will continue on in her part-time position as secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO. Her term at the state labor federation runs through October 2019.



Barbara Byrd

...AT&T strike

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The company is also increasingly using outside contractors known as "authorized dealers" to sell products and services. Workers at those locations aren't AT&T employees — or union members.

Headquartered in Portland, 666-member CWA Local 7901 represents several hundred AT&T wireless and DIRECTV workers in the Portland metro area. On Day One of the strike, Local 7901 decided to concentrate its forces at the AT&T retail outlet at Mall 205. There, Local 7901



executive vice president Celeste Jones, an employee of the AT&T store in Gresham, led a group of about 20 strikers and supporters. Participation in the strike was stronger at some locations than others: Only some workers at the Mall 205 store walked off the job, and employees at the Lloyd Center store on Northeast Broadway reportedly resolved as a group not to take part in the strike at all, but strike participation was solid at the Gresham and Clackamas Town Center locations.

"It was really weighing in my heart, and I felt like this was the right decision," said Mall 205 AT&T employee Jacob Shoda

about his choice to take part in the strike. Shoda, who's worked at AT&T for six years, said he's reached the top of the pay scale, \$17.50 an hour. He also earns \$1,200 to \$2,000 a month in sales commissions, but a change AT&T made in its commission structure significantly reduced his commission earnings in the last year. CWA wants the next contract to bar the company from changing the commission structure unilaterally.

About 90 minutes into the strike, the Mall 205 picketers got a visit from a special guest: U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley. Merkley dropped by to meet strikers and walk the strike picket line, along with several members of his staff.

Strikers returned to their regularly scheduled shifts Monday morning May 22.



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