

Labor peace on West Coast docks will run through 2022

ILWU members have approved a 3-year contract extension.

West Coast longshore workers have voted to extend — by three years — their collective bargaining agreement with the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA).

In an official statement, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) said the vote came after a year-long internal debate.

The previous agreement wasn't set to expire until July 1, 2019. Now it will run through July 1, 2022. It was PMA that proposed the extension.

The agreement covers about 20,000 longshore workers at 29 ports in California, Oregon and Washington, including about 8,000 part-time "casual" workers. Only the full-time permanent members were allowed to vote on the agreement, and they ratified it by a 67 percent margin, the ILWU said Aug. 4.

The agreement contains no concessions by the union. It raises wages, increases employer pension contributions, and maintains existing health benefits. Neither the union nor



THE UNION IS MY SWORD AND SHIELD: West Coast longshore workers make \$42 an hour not because of employer generosity but because over the years they have fought tenaciously through their union to maintain their way of life.

employer group released specific details. Longshore workers currently make about \$42 an hour, while casuals make just over \$30 an hour.

By proposing to extend the contract, PMA chose to avoid the conflict that erupted the last time.

After contract negotiations bogged down in 2014, PMA accused ILWU members of intentionally slowing down their work loading and unloading cargo; the union denied those charges.

For the union, extending the contract reduces political risk. During the last negotiations, big shippers and retailers loudly clamored for federal intervention. Under U.S. labor law the president can seek a court order forcing workers back to work if a strike or lock-out is deemed to be a threat to national health or safety. President Trump hasn't made any statements taking sides between PMA and ILWU, but some ILWU members may not have wanted to take chances on a strike with Trump as president.

Altogether, ILWU represents about 50,000 longshore workers, marine clerks, and warehouse workers on the West Coast of the United States and Canada, Hawaii, and Panama, plus workers at Powell's Books in Portland. East Coast and Gulf Coast longshore workers are represented by a separate union, the International Longshore Association.



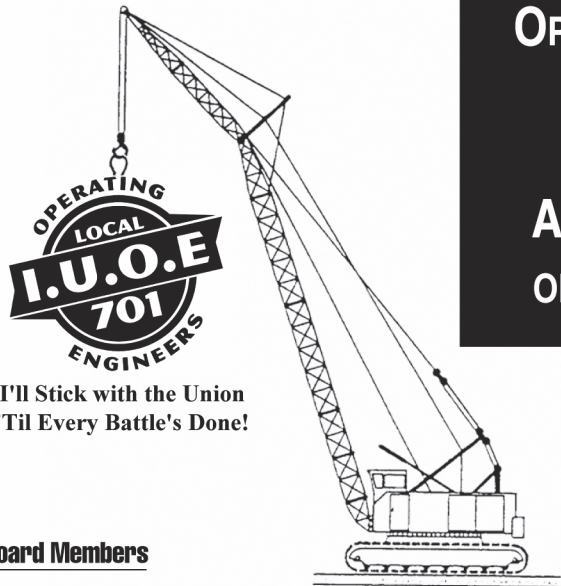
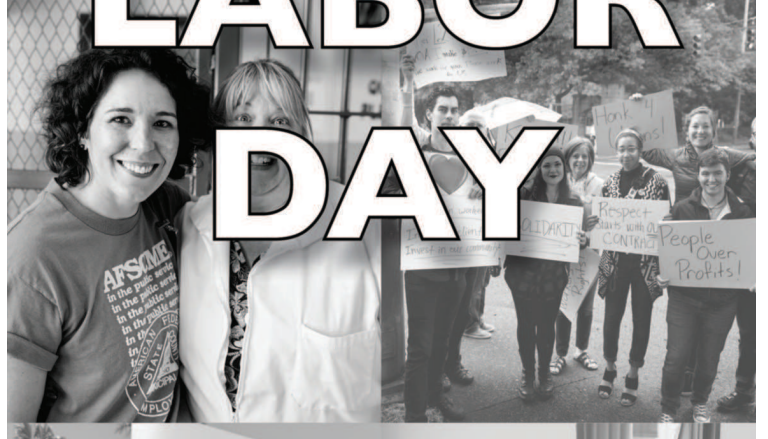
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