

UNION DEMOCRACY

Bakers Local 114 elections

Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 114 held officer elections and announced the results Dec 12. Elected were:

President: Andrew Stern
(Bimbo/Oroweat)

Vice President: Tami Mathews
(Kroger Clackamas Bakery)

Recording Secretary: Alejandro Ahumada (Local 114)

Secretary Treasurer: Terry Lansing
(Local 114)

Business Agent: Darren Hamann
(Local 114)

Trustees: Mario Aldaco (Franz Portland),
Laurie Errend (Albertson's), Bill Vaughn
(Kroger Clackamas Bakery)

Executive Board Members:
Steve Dade (Franz Springfield)
Noe Salcido (Franz Springfield)
David Gettman (Bimbo/Oroweat)

Denise Wisely (QFC)
Sylvia Stredwick (Albertson's)
Zack Murphy (Safeway Clackamas Bakery)
Gene Beaudoin (Local 114)
Louise Moncada (Bimbo/Oroweat)

Delegates:
Gene Beaudoin (Local 114)
Alejandro Ahumada (Local 114)
Tami Mathews (Kroger Clackamas Bakery)
Zack Murphy (Safeway Clackamas Bakery)

All positions are for three-year terms that run 2018 to 2021. Candidates were unopposed for all positions except delegate, which had eight nominees for four positions.

Local 114 represents about 1,150 workers at the Franz, Kroger, Safeway and Bimbo/Oroweat wholesale bakeries as well as cake decorators and bakery department workers in unionized grocery stores.

RETIREMENT

Congress looks at failing multi-employer pensions

One solution, favored by many Democrats, is to have the Treasury step in to help

A committee of the U.S. House of Representatives has begun looking at a looming crisis of failing union-sponsored multi-employer pension plans. Multi-employer pensions are pensions created through collective bargaining agreements between employers and a union. They're common in construction, where they provide a retirement benefit for workers who may have multiple employers over a career.

There are about 1,400 multi-employer pension plans in all, with about 10 million union workers and retirees enrolled. Most are doing fine financially, but a significant minority are seriously underfunded and are projected to run out of money within the next 20 years.

When they do, they're expected to exhaust the assets of the government program that's supposed to insure them. The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) maintains a

separate program for multi-employer pension plans: Plans pay premiums to the PBGC, and the PBGC pays benefits if the plans become insolvent.

The program's premiums and benefit levels are low. Premiums were just \$9 a year per participant til 2012, and are now \$28 a year. As for benefit levels, the maximum guaranteed benefit for a retiree with 30 years of service is \$12,870 annually. That guarantee hasn't increased since 2001 and isn't indexed for inflation.

The financial condition of the PBGC's multiemployer program is dire, and without action will be worse, PBGC director Thomas Reeder told the Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor and Pensions of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce at a Nov. 29 hearing. As of Sept. 30, the program had assets of \$2.3 billion and projected liabilities of \$67.3 billion. That's because more than 100 multiemployer plans are expected to fail, in addition to the 72 that already have.

If the PBGC's multiemployer program runs out of money, the

result will be catastrophic, Reeder said: The only money available for benefit payments would be the ongoing incoming multiemployer premiums, and currently those amount to less than \$300 million a year.

The Nov. 29 hearing didn't discuss solutions, but some Democratic members of Congress have one: a proposal for the U.S. Treasury to issue bonds to fund 30-year loans to the pension plans to enable them to make investments and pay benefits as scheduled. If the investments do sufficiently well, the loans could be repaid. It's known as the Butch Lewis Act, named after a former Teamsters Local 100 president who fought to save Teamster pensions until his death in December 2015. In the Senate, the bill, S 2147, is sponsored by Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and has 13 Democratic co-sponsors. Its House version, HR 4444, is sponsored by Congressman Richard Neal (D-Mass.) and has 106 co-sponsors, including Oregon representatives Suzanne Bonamici, Earl Blumenauer and Peter DeFazio.

OPEN FORUM

New Seasons union-busters

The very hiring of Cruz & Associates by New Seasons shows that regardless of all their rhetoric, they want to not give any concessions to their workers, and the company bottom line is all that really matters. I'm not in Portland often, but usually go to New Seasons when I'm visiting. If they succeed in preventing a union, I'll never go in there again.

Bayard Pidgeon
SEIU Local 503
Klamath Falls

Young Machinists raise funds to bring Xmas to foster kids

I am a caseworker in the teen unit at Gresham DHS. Every year at Christmas time, we stress, worry and often pay for \$10 gift cards out of our own pockets just so these kids have something to open at the hardest time of the year for them. They are away from their families, friends and loved ones and most often – it's *not* their fault at all. Last year many of those teens did not get gifts. Many of these teens have *no one*. They are

wards of the state. As we scramble to try and find adequate placements for them, we also scramble to try and find gifts for them. Christmas and birthdays are extra hard times for these kids. They feel alone, isolated and unwanted.

This year is different, thanks to this amazing group of angels, the Young Machinists. I have seen big smiles and big 'thank you's from my kids as I race to deliver the wonderful gifts they have been given. Not only have you given them trees, and something to put under those trees ... you have given them *hope*. And hope is something these kids need more than ever.

Thank you, thank you, from the Teen Unit. We have cried tears of joy over this.

Debra Clayton
SEIU Local 503
Portland

Daimler Trucks withdraws from Machinists pension

I want to congratulate the union reps who worked with Daimler to get this new plan into operation. It looks like it will be good

for those who have *not* retired yet, and seems to help the existing pension plan that we (current retirees) are relying upon for our livelihood. My only concern is what the new projections are for solvency with our pension plan. I personally would like my pension (cut drastically since 2009) to remain intact, without the need for reducing my or any retirees' benefits in future years. I retired in 2013 at a *much, much* lower amount than what I could have retired at in 2009, had I retired on my 55th birthday that year. I missed the cutoff by two months. I really do *not* need any more takeaways in my financial life. I worked at the Freightliner plant since 1978, and retired in October 2013.

David Barton
Machinists Lodge 1005
Vancouver

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Northwest Labor Press welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be 300 words or less and should include contact info as well as which union you belong to. Send to editor@nwlaborpress.org or Attn: Editor; PO Box 13150; Portland, OR 97213.



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