

Union Iron Workers erect new roller coaster at Oaks Park in record time



A raising gang from Iron Workers Local 29 “set a world record” erecting a new roller coaster at Oaks Amusement Park in Southeast Portland. The Adrenaline Peak roller coaster opens on the midway March 24.

For those who attend the annual Labor Day Picnic at Oaks Park, the old Looping Thunder roller coaster has always been a crowd favorite, but it closed last September after a 21-year run.

Park officials say the new

roller coaster is unlike anything Portland has experienced before. It features a 72-foot vertical lift, past-vertical initial drop, a 97 degree loop, an Immelman turn and heartline roll. Maximum speed is 45 mph.

The new ride is a Gerstlauer Euro-Fighter roller coaster designed and fabricated by Gerstlauer Amusement Rides of Germany. The coaster was shipped in containers to Portland, and Oaks Park hired WBF Construc-

tion Services of Seattle to erect it. WBF specializes in building amusement rides all over the world. A technician from Gerstlauer, Martin Daexle, oversaw the installation.

John Barlean, a 44-year ironworker recently retired from Local 29, has been friends with the owners of WBF for years. Now working for WBF as a part time consultant, Barlean convinced the owners to use union ironworkers on the Oaks Park job. The company signed a one-project project labor agreement, and the move paid off big time.

“It went great,” Barlean said. “This raising gang set a world record. No other crew in the world has erected that ride and had all the bolts torqued in two weeks.”

The Local 29 crew—connectors Jens Ulven and James Marble, foreman Kevin Reams, hook-on guys Mike Cosgrove and Aaron Harlan, and apprentice Ashton Oesterreich—worked for 6 days the first week,



Photos courtesy of Brenda Stephens, Oaks Park.



Ashton Oesterreich and James Marble unfurl union banner.

and 5 days the second week, completing the ride on Feb. 16. Placing the 1,050 feet of track with a 100-ton Link Belt rough terrain crane was Neal Davis, a member of Operating Engineers Local 701 employed by Campbell Crane.

“It would take most crews 10 days just to erect the ride, and another week to torque the bolts,” said Barlean, citing the crews’ expert rigging skills and connecting skills in the air.

Pictured below left to right: James Marble, Mike Cosgrove, Aaron Harlan, Martin Daexle, Ashton Oesterreich, John Barlean, Jens Ulven, and Kevin Reams.



George Kolibaba, director of operations at Oaks Park, told the Labor Press that Gerstlauer and Martin “were really impressed with how fast it went up.”

Protesters call Reagan’s induction into DOL’s ‘Labor Hall of Honor’ a ‘shame’

By Chris Garlock

Metropolitan Washington Central Labor Council & Press Associates Inc.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — “What’s a crying shame? Ronald Reagan in the hall of fame!” chanted two dozen American Federation of Government Employee (AFGE) members and supporters on an impromptu picket line March 1 outside the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

The picketers braved wind and rain to protest the former Republican president’s induction into the Hall of Honor alongside labor giants like Frances Perkins, FDR’s Labor Secretary and the

first female Cabinet member, and Cesar Chavez, the legendary United Farm Workers co-founder and leader.

“Reagan was a disgrace,” said one DOL employee. “The union movement suffered because of him.”

“What he did to worker safety and health standards was abysmal,” said another.

Protesters took turns leading chants, and one AFGE member even impersonated the former president, asking GOP Trump Administration Labor Secretary Alex Acosta to “take my name off this wall!”

DOL political appointees

named Reagan to the hall, which is not to be confused with Labor’s Hall of Fame elsewhere. The Hall of Honor was established in 1988 to honor Americans whose contributions have elevated working conditions, wages, and overall quality of life for American families.

The citation conveniently mentioned Reagan’s presidency of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG), where he played two prominent roles. One was getting good contracts for SAG members. The other was “singing” about alleged Communists in the entertainment industry during the witch-hunting McCarthy era. His

plaque cites only the first.

It also does not mention Reagan is known for firing the Air Traffic Controllers in 1981 after they struck over unsafe work conditions. The PATCO strike left up to 14,000 people without jobs and, more importantly, gave a green light to corporate chieftains to declare war upon workers and unions, which they have waged ever since.

All that prompted Jordan Barab, former deputy assistant secretary of labor in the Obama Administration, to include the Reagan induction in what he called “Kill the Labor Movement Week,” following the Feb. 26

U.S. Supreme Court hearing on the *Janus* case, which would create national right-to-work for public employees.

“Inducting Reagan into the Labor Hall of Honor is equivalent to inducting Colonel Sanders into the Poultry Hall of Honor,” Barab said, adding that an email inviting DOL employees to attend the ceremony didn’t make one mention of fired air traffic controllers, nor any fond memories of destroying OSHA’s cotton dust publications because the cover displayed a photo of a worker with brown lung disease, nor any mention of Reagan devastating OSHA’s enforcement program.”