

Guest Opinion

By Ed Barnes, Retired IBEW Local 48



Washington I-5 Bridge Group focuses on only one item — replace the I-5 Bridge

The I-5 Bridge Group was established in Washington to try to expedite the replacement of the I-5 Bridge. We agreed at the time we formed this group that the only issue we were going to take up would be the replacement of the I-5 Bridge.

Our group believes that the I-5 Bridge is a project that not only has statewide significance, but also national significance in that three presidents — Eisenhower, Bush, and Obama — have designated this project as one that has national priority.

The Washington Legislature during the last session developed legislation that they hoped would encourage the state of Oregon to work with the state of Washington in developing a project that could expedite bridge replacement. This legislation provided that the state of Washington and Oregon Department of Transportation would prepare and submit to a group made up of legislators from the two states the plans and reports that have been prepared in the past concerning the replacement of the I-5 Bridge.

It was hoped that the leg-

islative group, with the help of the two state's governors, would be able to come up with a plan that might be considered by the legislature during the coming session. We need to have a project ready to go that might be considered by the federal government if an infrastructure bill is to be passed and funded this year.

Our community is feeling the impact that doing nothing to solve the I-5 Bridge problem is having. Currently it is having a real adverse impact on the economy of both states and on our Interstate Defense Highway.

We need the governors of Oregon and Washington to agree on a plan and take the lead with their legislative leaders on establishing a project that is ready to go and that both states are willing to fund.

We have talked about a third bridge and other crossings, but none of these proposals will have the impact and solve the problems that exist on the Interstate system. We do need to study in the future other accesses across the Columbia River after we solve our top priority of the I-5

Bridge replacement. We all know the I-5 project will have a huge impact on our economy and the Interstate Highway System of our two states.

Tolls will be required in the future, and most everyone recognizes this. We can not let the issue of tolls affect the replacement of the I-5 Bridge. The Departments of Transportation of both states of Oregon and Washington will be the one's that resolve the toll issue.

We all need to be working together to develop a project that has statewide and national significance, which the original proposal of the CRC had, and which both states had come to an agreement upon. It is important that we review the agreement we had with the state of Oregon and see what parts of that agreement can be used in expediting replacement of the I-5 Bridge.

Ed Barnes is a retired business manager of IBEW Local 48 and a former Washington Transportation commissioner. He serves as second vice president of the NW Oregon Labor Council.

...Machinists win toehold at Boeing South Carolina

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South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster wants to keep it that way.

“Out-of-state union bosses have no interest in the future of South Carolina or this remarkable company,” McMaster tweeted 10 days before the Boeing union vote. “We aren't going to let out-of-state labor unions ruin the wonderful working environment in our state.”

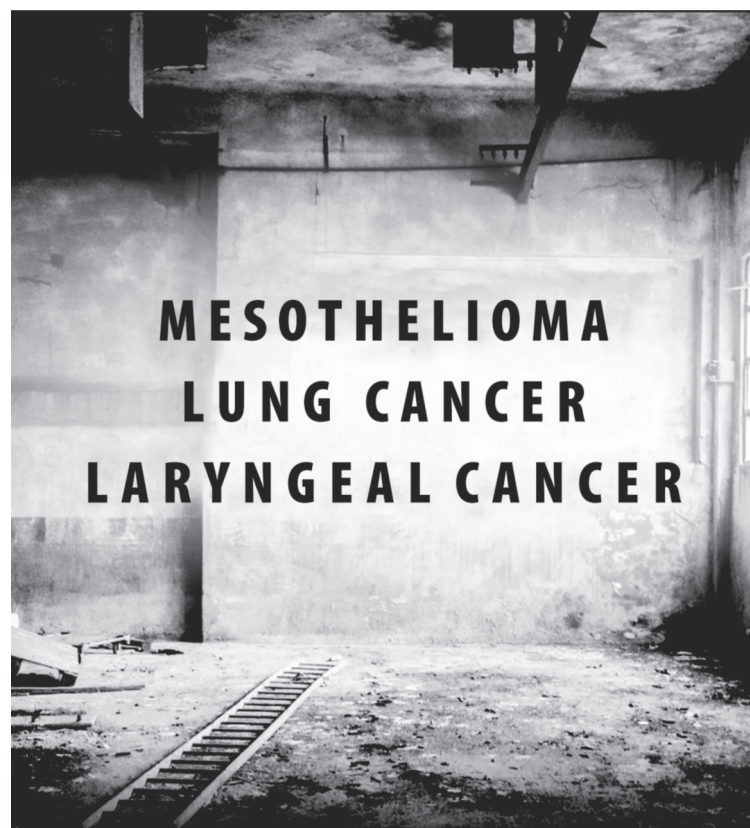
Boeing brought in anti-union consultants to talk to the workers in mandatory meetings. It didn't work. Flight-line technicians at the South Carolina plant earn about 30 percent less than their union coun-

terparts in Washington state.

The result isn't a vote against Boeing, said Machinists International President Bob Martinez in a press statement: “It was a vote for the return of American prosperity. Unions are the best mechanism for protecting the interest of working men and women.”

The IAM represents more than 35,000 Boeing employees at 24 locations nationwide.

Boeing said it will appeal the vote result, saying the workers aren't distinct enough to be allowed to have their own union, but should be part of a larger plant-wide group. That larger group rejected Machinist representation by 2,097 to 731 in a Feb. 15, 2017 union vote.



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Unionization is sweeping the media

On June 6, *The New Yorker* magazine voluntarily recognized NewsGuild-CWA, a sector of Communications Workers of America — after nearly 90 percent of its 115 workers signed cards seeking to join. That came one day after workers at the business magazine *Fast Company* announced they were joining Writers Guild of America (WGA). The two unions are witnessing a wave of worker organizing in both print and online media, demanding greater job security, fair and transparent pay, editorial autonomy, and newsroom diversity:

- **The Chicago Tribune** newspaper voluntarily recognized NewsGuild-CWA in May, after more than 85 percent of its 280+ journalists signed cards. It's the first union in the paper's 171-year history.
- **Mic** in March voluntarily recognized



NewsGuild as representative of its 50 employees.

- **Los Angeles Times** workers voted 248-44 to join NewsGuild-CWA in January. It's the first union in its 137-year history.
- **Slate** employees voted 45-7 in January to join Writers Guild of America.
- **Vox Media** in November 2017 agreed to recognize WGA as the representative of 400 employees at its online media outlets: Curbed, Eater, Recode, SB Nation, Racked, Polygon, The Verge and Vox.
- **Vice Media** in September 2017 voluntarily recognized the decision by 430

employees to join WGA and the Motion Picture Editors Guild (IATSE Local 700), and is now in bargaining.

- **The Intercept** online investigative site recognized WGA in April 2017 as the representative of its 32-member staff.
- **Thrillist** workers voted 56-3 to join WGA in March 2017.
- **Huffington Post** ratified its first union contract in January 2017 covering 200+ workers, after having voluntarily recognized WGA the year before.
- **ThinkProgress** news site ratified its first WGA contract in July 2016, covering 30 employees.
- **Gawker** ratified its first WGA contract in 2016 after a 80-27 union vote in 2015.
- **Salon.com** workers voted to join WGA in 2015.
- **The Guardian US** edition ratified its first NewsGuild-CWA contract in September 2017, two years after workers voted 45-0 to join.