



American Postal Workers Union Local 128 legislative director Daniel Cortez presents Oregon Congressman Earl Blumenauer a 'Thank You' plaque signed by hundreds of Oregonians, including Bob Gross and Alice Muccio (photo above right). Oregon's Congressional Democrats unanimously oppose privatizing the U.S. Post Office.

U.S. Postal Service (USPS) employees, joined by community supporters, held rallies at 140 sites across the nation Oct 8 to sound an alarm against a Trump Administration proposal to privatize the agency. In Portland, several dozen people gathered in the plaza in front of Congressman Earl Blumenauer's and Senator Ron Wyden's offices in Northeast

Portland at Lloyd Center. Blumenauer made a brief appearance to show support. Blumenauer, Wyden, and Oregon's entire Democratic congressional delegation are co-sponsors of resolutions that call for the USPS to remain "an independent establishment of the Federal Government ... not subject to privatization." In the House, 219

members from both sides of the aisle are co-sponsors. Missing from the list is Oregon Republican Greg Walden.

"We [USPS] have been part of the American fabric for over 200 years," said Kevin Card, a former Branch 82 letter carrier and now an officer with the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC). "There's no reason to



privatize us, except for a bunch of greedy billionaires who want to reach their hands in the pockets of every American and pull out as much money as they can."

In a 2018 Pew Research Center poll, the Post Office got the highest ratings of any major government agency, with 88 percent of Americans expressing satisfaction. The Postal Service, which is mentioned in the U.S. Constitution, delivers 40 percent of the world's mail without receiving a dime in taxpayer money.

In May, Trump created a task force to evaluate USPS operations and finances. The executive order creating the task force sug-

gested that USPS's universal service obligation (which requires it to deliver to every address in the nation for the same price) is no longer necessary. While the task force has yet to release its findings, the Administration tipped its hand in the Office of Management and Budget's government-wide reorganization plan released in June. Notably, the plan called for eventual privatization of the Postal Service.

Oregon Rural Letter Carriers Association president Scott Murahashi says if USPS is sold, private contractors will pick off the lucrative inner city routes and leave rural communities stranded.

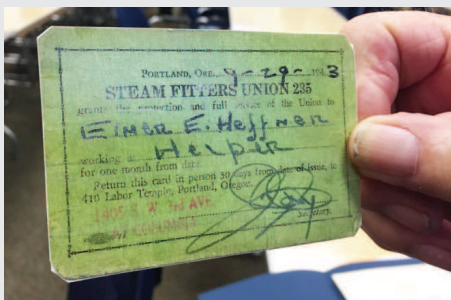
A UNION MEMBER – FOR 75 YEARS

Two days after he turned 16, Elmer Heffner got his union card. "Steam Fitters Union 235," it said. That was Sept. 29, 1943. Seventy-five years later, Heffner, 91, is believed to be the longest-standing member of what's now UA Local 290, a distinction that earned him honors at a well-attended Sept. 20 meeting of the union's retiree chapter.

Heffner began his union work life at Albina Pipe, bending pipes used in Portland's wartime shipyards for four hours a day while he continued to study at Benson High School. A year in, an on-the-job injury cost him a kidney, but he was soon back up, welding pipe on the waterfront. After World War Two, he began an apprenticeship in Plumbers Local 51. [Plumbers Local 51 and Steam Fitters 235 merged in the 1980s to become Local 290.] Heffner spent the next three decades as an employee of two union-signatory construction contractors, Ideal Plumbing and Dales Plumbing. Laying pipe for medical clinics, gas stations and apartment buildings was hard work.

"It's a lot easier today. Everything's plastic," Heffner told the Labor Press. "When I first started out out, everything was concrete, cast iron or steel. There was nothing light. That's why I had four back surgeries. Everything was heavy."

Thirty-seven years after joining the union, Heffner retired with a union disability pension March 14, 1980, at age 52. "I'm glad I was a union member all my life," Heffner says. "It's a good living."



America's top pointer

Matt Botts of Bricklayers Local 1 Oregon won first place in the Pointer-Cleaner-Caulker category of an international apprentice competition. The International Apprentice Contest, sponsored by the training arm of the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Crafts (BAC), takes place once every three years, and draws contestants from all over the United States and Canada.

Botts is a third-year apprentice, a member of Local 1, and an employee of Tigard-based Pioneer Waterproofing. He outperformed 15 other contestants in the 2018 contest, which took place Oct. 6 at the International Masonry Institute in Bowie, Maryland. Botts had qualified for the national contest by winning the same category at the BAC's Western States Apprenticeship Contest, held May 18-19 in Las Vegas.

Pointer-Cleaner-Caulker specialists specialize in restoring old masonry. A pointer replaces mortar between masonry units, a cleaner cleans all masonry



surfaces, and a caulker applies sealants to expansion joints. In the contest, competitors show their skill on beaded and grapevine joints, fix limestone precast to make it look original, infill brick over iron after it is flashed and sealed to simulate a window opening, and correctly answer questions on a written test.