

JOBS

Oregon Zoo contracts out food service

Reversing the usual narrative, workers will be better off at Aramark, thanks to skillful union negotiations.

By Don McIntosh

It seemed at first like a bomb had landed. In January, as Laborers Local 483 prepared to bargain a new union contract for workers at the Oregon Zoo, management notified the union that it was planning to contract out food service to Aramark. Up to 180 low-wage union members in the Zoo's cafes and catering operations would lose their jobs — four years and one union contract after they tried to improve conditions by joining Local 483. Local 483 represents zookeepers and other workers at Oregon Zoo, which is run by Metro, the regional government for the Portland metropolitan area.

Privatization — hiring a private contractor to replace public employees — is usually seen by public employee unions like Local 483 as a mortal threat. But this time, members of the union bargaining team had leverage: The union contract was still in effect through June 30, and it contained a clause barring the contracting out of union-represented work. Local 483 filed a grievance alleging that the plan to privatize violated that contract, and the two sides prepared for a binding arbitration that would decide the matter.

But instead of rolling the dice with an arbitrator, Local 483 with the help of attorney Barbara Diamond negotiated an agreement with Metro that will improve conditions both for the workers who



Zoo employees Nic Boehm and Raeven Longanecker have the same employer now, but as of Jan. 14, Longanecker will be an employee of contractor Aramark.

will now be Aramark employees, and for some of the Zoo bargaining unit members they'll be leaving behind.

Thanks to the agreement, when Aramark takes over food service at the Zoo Jan. 14, it will hire all the Zoo's current food service workers. They'll

Turn to Page 10

The next generation of Cement Masons



CEMENT MASONS LOCAL 555 AND PLASTERERS LOCAL 82 RECOGNIZE LONGTIME MEMBERS AND GRADUATING APPRENTICES at their annual holiday dinner Dec. 1, which drew a record crowd of 243. Local 555 also turned out its largest class of new journeymen in the history of the local. New journeymen are Jose Avalos Guzman, Shane Clausen, Devan Dickson, Derek Engler, Cristian Ponce, Jared Hinsley, Lakota Lawson, Matt Parker, Sean Villareal, Valerie Carroll, Bliss Deckert, Matt Earley, James Grant, Jazmyn Howland, Sucrija Kurtovic, Lucas McKay, Chris Pillsbury, and Jeremy Williamson. Standing with them on the left are International Rep Brett Hinsley, Apprenticeship Instructor Jeremy Kendall, and Local 555 Business Manager Geoff Kossak. Several Local 555 members were awarded pins for longstanding membership, including F.L. Cole, 50 years; John Blom and John Christianson, 40 years; D.J. Bauley, Robert Chavez, James Lang, Kenneth Meyer, Matt Bickford, David Kindt, Nicholas Lytle, and Hal Wooten, 30 years; and Robert Garner, Delbert Martin, and Mark Hambrook, 25 years. PLASTERERS LOCAL 82 pin recipients were: Stan Stotts, 50 years; Anthony Jackson, 30 years; and Ronald Courtain, Dan Korynta, Mark Schlender, Richard G. Ward, Arlie Grunseth, George Mikkola, Richard J. Ward, and Steve Zuercher, 25 years.



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