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Union cannabis comes to Oregon

Seattle-based cannabis retail chain Have a Heart opened its first Oregon store in Salem Nov. 26, and on Dec. 15 ratified a collective bargaining agreement with United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 555.

The store is located just off Highway 99E at 4618 Portland Rd. NE. The union agreement covers 19 employees at the Salem store plus workers at any future Oregon locations where a majority sign union cards. It set wages of $15.30 an hour for budtenders and $16.30 for lead shop workers. Workers will get health and pension benefits through trusts sponsored by the international union. They'll also get holiday pay, paid time off and bonuses, and will have standard union disciplinary rights. A joint labor-management committee will address safety. The store will also display a union shop card and sell union-label cannabis products. The agreement runs through July 1, 2021.

The union agreement is the second for Have a Heart, which signed a deal Aug. 24 with Seattle-headquartered UFCW Local 21 that covers 134 workers at five Washington stores. At the national level, UFCW has a division for marijuana workers known as Cannabis Workers Rising.

Have a Heart isn't the first Oregon cannabis company to sign with UFCW: A company called Stoney Brothers signed a contract for a newly opened Portland shop in July 2015, but the store closed not long after. Competition in Oregon's legal cannabis market is fierce. But Have a Heart expects to stick around; in September, the company announced $25 million in venture capital funding. And it's expanding rapidly. It now has 16 locations in six states and has 18 pending applications in five additional states.

—Don McIntosh

Transit union cries foul as TriMet contracts out shuttle service for its own drivers

By Don McIntosh

Is Oregon's largest transit agency incapable of operating a single shuttle bus? You might think so given TriMet's decision to hire an outside contractor to provide temporary shuttle service for its own workers.

"Our members do not want to get to and from work on buses driven by non-union drivers."

— Local 757 President Shirley Block

TriMet's Powell Garage bus facility at 9800 SE Powell Boulevard has begun an extensive renovation that will continue through 2022. Because the employee parking lot at the site is being used as a staging area for construction, bus drivers and mechanics will need to park at the Mall 205 park-and-ride lot and be transported to and from Powell Garage by shuttle.

To provide that service, TriMet's board of directors at their Dec. 12 meeting authorized General Manager Doug Kelsey to hire a private parking shuttle bus company, Chicago-based SP Plus Corporation. The five-minute, 1.75-mile shuttle will operate 24 hours a day, leaving every 15 minutes from each end. The board resolution says SP may provide the service for up to five years and be paid as much as $2,765,970.

That didn't sit well with Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757. In a letter to Kelsey and the Board the next day, Local 757 officers Shirley Block, Jon Hunt and Mary Longoria said TriMet's frontline workforce almost universally opposes the contract. "Our members have been clear with us: They do not want to get to and from work on buses driven by non-union, third-party drivers," they wrote.

"It is the height of absurdity that Oregon's largest transit agency would contract out an employee shuttle, redistributing public tax dollars to an Illinois-based corporation, when you already employ over 1,300 professional bus operators who are eminently qualified to provide shuttle services for their fellow employees. TriMet could and must operate this service in-house using the professional, union-represented labor force which already moves the Portland region."

TriMet management agreed to meet to discuss the decision the first week of January, after this issue went to The mi

Labor on Trump's new NAFTA: Not good enough

By Mark Gruenberg
PAI Staff Writer

WASHINGTON (PAI)—GOP President Donald Trump's "New NAFTA" is drawing flak from unions, their allies, and lawmakers — and especially one lawmaker who's led successful fights against past so-called "free trade" treaties. That bodes ill for the pact, which Trump is supposed to send to the 116th Congress this year.

Trump negotiated the revised NAFTA with Canada and Mexico and signed it with their leaders at a meeting in Buenos Aires on Nov. 30. It would replace the 25-year-old NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) which GOP President George H.W. Bush negotiated and Democratic President Bill Clinton signed – and which Congress passed over labor's strenuous opposition.

Union leaders said at the time that NAFTA would cost thousands of U.S. factory jobs, and they were right. Manufacturers of everything from cars to cookies decamped to Mexico, exploiting its low wages, weak labor laws and company unions – and taking 750,000-plus U.S. jobs with them.

U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.), is renowned as a skilled vote-counter and lobbyist among her House colleagues. As of Jan. 3, DeLauro was part of a new Democratic majority behind her in the House. A veteran pro-worker Democrat from New Haven, she led the successful fight inside Congress that forced President Barack Obama to shelve the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership pact, before Trump officially killed it.

"Despite Trump's rhetoric describing the continued loss of manufacturing jobs as 'American carnage' since the beginning of his presidency, it does not seem he has learned anything," said DeLauro. "NAFTA 2.0 would not help end the outsourcing incentives that have hollowed out communities across the country. In its current form, this deal is far from being one that helps working people across North America."

"As I and my fellow Democrats have said all along, the final package must remove the current outsourcing incentives, raise wages for American workers, include strong labor and environmental standards with swift and certain enforcement, and ensure our food safety."

Union leaders examining the new NAFTA, formally called the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), came to the same conclusions.

Machinists President Robert Martinez predicted the jobs drain will continue.

"Mexico now employs between 30,000 and 40,000 aerospace workers and has become a major exporter to the U.S. Other industries also outsourced work to Mexico to take advantage of its low labor costs derived from suppressing basic workers' rights," he said.

The latest was United Technologies, which announced it would close its Chula Vista, Calif., aerospace production line and shift 300 jobs to Mexico. It's following General Electric, Honeywell, Cessna and other aerospace firms.

IAM hoped Trump would bargain a pact that would "address outsourcing" and guarantee fundamental human rights and better living standards for workers. He didn't, Martinez said.

"After careful review, we conclude that as currently written, and without further changes…NAFTA 2.0 will do little if anything to stop the outsourcing from the U.S. and Canada and the related wage suppression of workers in Mex-

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