

## Merkley, Bonamici want to ban asbestos

Oregon Democratic U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley and Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici met at a Bethany fire station March 21 to talk about the continuing dangers of asbestos with an invited panel of Oregon labor leaders. The two are reintroducing a bill that would ban the manufacturing, processing, use, and distribution of asbestos, which is a known human carcinogen with no safe level of exposure. Some uses of asbestos are already banned, but the substance still occasionally shows up in baby powder and cosmetics, and the Centers for Disease Control reports that asbestos-related deaths are on the rise. Fire fighters and roofers are among those exposed when asbestos-containing products are disturbed or removed.

"Most people are mystified by this bill," Merkley said. "It's really still legal to import and distribute asbestos?"

The House version of the bill has 31 co-sponsors, and the Senate version has 13, all Democrats, including Oregon's Earl Blumenauer, Peter DeFazio, and Ron Wyden.

## WORKER SAFETY

### Honored for safety by Oregon's governor

**IBEW safety expert Barry Moreland** got one of the top honors at this year's Oregon Governor's Occupational Safety and Health (GOSH) Conference. As safety director at the NECA/IBEW Local 48 Electrical Training Center (NIETC), Moreland trains IBEW Local 48 members in accident prevention and safety and helps the union electrical contractors of NECA maintain safe workplaces.

The GOSH conference is the largest workplace safety conference in the Northwest, and one of the largest in the United States. A panel of industry professionals chose Moreland to receive GOSH's Labor Representative Award, which was presented during a ceremony March 6 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland.

Moreland has been a member of IBEW since 1993, has taught apprentices since



Barry Moreland

2002, and studied safety and health at the AFL-CIO's National Labor College. Since then, he's served on numerous Oregon OSHA committees, helping craft the state's confined space regulations, review training grant applications, and disperse scholarship funding to children of workers fatally injured on the job.

Also honored at the GOSH event was **Snyder Roofing of Oregon LLC**, a union-signatory commercial roofing contractor that employs members of Roofers Local 49.

## UNION ORGANIZING

### Clackamas pet hospital goes union

One thing you can say for sure about the process America's workers use to unionize: It's not fast. At a Clackamas, Oregon, pet hospital affiliated with the VCA chain, a group of 113 workers voted July 5, 2018, on whether or not to join International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 5. The union won by one vote — 54 to 53 — but the company challenged the right of four workers to cast ballots, and it took the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) eight and a half months to rule on those challenges.

The result, certified March 19: Local 5 won by one vote.

That means the pet hospital — VCA Northwest Veterinary Specialists — must now recognize the union and engage in "good faith" bargaining over a

first union contract.

The Clackamas pet hospital, located at 16756 S.E. 82nd Drive, is part of the massive 800-hospital VCA chain, which was bought in 2017 by Mars, Inc. — a privately held behemoth owned by America's third richest family. Mars is by far the largest of several giant national veterinary companies that are taking over an industry that used to be full of mom-and-pop operations.

The Clackamas unit is one of three where workers joined ILWU in the last year year. Workers at a VCA unit in San Francisco joined ILWU Local 6, and workers at Mars' BluePearl subsidiary in Seattle joined ILWU Local 9. Both are in the process of negotiating a first contract.

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