

## UNION DEMOCRACY

# Painters and Allied Trades District Council 5 elects new leadership

By Don McIntosh

IUPAT District Council 5 — one of the Northwest's largest construction union councils — elected new leadership June 8. Based on votes cast at 12 locals on June 8, the 6,100-member district council will be headed by Todd Springer from Portland-based Glaziers Local 740.

IUPAT stands for International Union of Painters and Allied Crafts. Springer, 45, wants to strengthen the “allied” in the union’s name, by getting members in different crafts to look out for each other at job sites, in order to raise standards for all. District Council 5 provides support and coordination for the 12 locals, which represent workers in Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Utah, and Northern Idaho. The District Council includes members of at least six distinct crafts, each with its own sub-specialties: painters, glaziers, drywall finishers, floor coverers, traffic control stripers, and sign and display workers.

Springer is a glazier by training. He grew up in Billings, Montana, where his father worked as a Teamster-represented truck driver. After graduating high school, he moved to the Portland area in 1992 at the urging of his uncle, an employee



Todd Springer of Portland-based Glaziers Local 740 won election among 12 IUPAT locals to head the district council.

of curtain wall contractor Harmon, Inc.

“He said, ‘We’ve got work for you for three months,’” Springer recalls. “... it’s been 27 years.”

At Harmon, Springer learned how to fabricate and assemble glass panels used for storefronts and for curtain wall. Later, he

worked in the field putting them up—constructing exterior façades, installing gaskets, and applying sealants.

Springer became active in Local 740 early on thanks to a trick played on him by Jerry Havens, a journeyman he was assigned to work with.

“He had me convinced it was

mandatory for apprentices to come to union meetings,” Springer said.

Springer completed his apprenticeship and became journeyman in 1997, and not long after, was made a foreman and general superintendent at Mountain Glass. In 2013, he was at the union hall paying his dues when business rep Jerry Fisher approached him and suggested he apply for a position as union organizer. Springer got the job in January 2014 and got busy organizing contractors, using a positive message about the benefits of becoming a union-signatory contractor. [Those advantages include affordable high-quality benefits, and access to top-tier skilled labor through the union hiring call.]

Springer succeeded Fisher as business rep in August 2015, but continued to prioritize organizing, and hired Mike James as organizer.

This year, with District Council 5 Secretary-Treasurer Business Manager Denis Sullivan retiring, Springer decided to run. Also vying for the office was John Boufford, business representative at Seattle-based Drywall Finishers Local 364.

Springer approached the campaign like an organizer, building a team, Team Springer, that campaigned at worksites in all five states. Springer ran in part on the strength of his record of growing Local 740: When he joined the staff in 2014, Local

740 had 11 contractors and about 300 members; today it has 22 contractors and about 600 members.

When ballots were tallied, the result was a 618-448 win for Springer. [One vote of confidence: Among those who know him best—members of Local 740—the vote for Springer was 266 to 0.]

He’ll have a four-year term to implement his agenda. Organizing is a top priority. Springer has a goal of growing membership to 7,500 by the end of 2022. He also wants to increase wages and benefits, especially among painters, who right now are the lowest paid of the allied trades. Part of that will be a fight against competing employers who commit wage theft by misclassifying workers.

He also wants to better unite the crafts that make up District Council 5. Whenever union members in any of the allied crafts find themselves working alongside nonunion workers in other crafts, Springer will encourage them to call their union representatives to visit the site. Members themselves are the most credible organizers, Springer says, and becoming eyes and ears for their reps will help them build union power.

Besides electing Springer to head District Council 5, members of the locals also elected their own business representatives, and District Council delegates. The District Council’s other elected offices—president, vice president, warden, executive board, and trustees—will be elected by those delegates when they meet on July 13. That’s also when Springer will be formally sworn in.

Two business rep candidates who ran in contested races alongside Springer were also elected: Toby Hoffman at Tacoma-based Painters and Stripers Local 1964, and Brandt Goble at IUPAT Local 77/427 in Idaho.

Business reps elected in Oregon and Southwest Washington were:

- **Scott Oldham** for Painters Local 10
- **Fred Hawkins** for Paint Makers, Sign, Display, Truck Painters & Allied Trades Local 1094
- **Dave Winkler** for Linoleum, Carpet and Soft Tile Applicators Local 1236
- **Mike James** for Glaziers Local 740



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