

# NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

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## UNION ORGANIZING

# Group wooing Major League Baseball signs 'harmony agreement' with labor

Portland Diamond Project (PDP), the organization behind the effort to bring Major League Baseball to Portland, has signed a "Labor Harmony Agreement" with local trade unions that almost ensures the stadium will operate with a union workforce, wall-to-wall.

The agreement was signed July 29 by PDP founder and president Craig Cheek, and Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain on behalf of 13 affiliated unions. Cheek, a former Nike executive, said bringing baseball to Portland could create as many as 6,500 jobs, including construction of the stadium.

The agreement covers all represented jobs within the park, including concessions, program and retail sales, property service, security, hospitality services, stage and theatrical presentations, and entertainment and audio/visual services. Agreements regarding ballpark construction jobs will be addressed at a later date.

Once a baseball team is secured, a stadium built, and workers hired, unions in the harmony agreement will have access to workers within their jurisdictions, and can organize



Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain (left) and Portland Diamond Project President Craig Cheek sign labor harmony agreement July 29.

them via card-check. The agreement also calls for binding arbitration should bargaining break down, plus strong successor language should the organization ever be sold.

"By signing this agreement, the Portland Diamond Project has shown us they value and respect the rights of working people and care for the prosperity of our community," Chamberlain said. "Oregon's unions are proud to be a part of the efforts to bring baseball to the Rose

City and to be a part of the only unionized sports arena in the state of Oregon. By giving workers the unfettered opportunity for union representation, we are securing a bright economic future for the women and men who will make baseball happen in Portland. When working people stand together in unions, we get a fair return on our hard work."

Cheek said his organization is proud to partner with the Oregon

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# Oregon governor and legislators who voted to cut PERS won't be on stage at Labor Day picnic

Oregon legislators who voted to cut Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) benefits—and the governor who signed the bill into law—won't be invited to appear on stage with other politicians at this year's Labor Day picnic at Oaks Park in Portland.

The picnic is sponsored by the Northwest Oregon Labor Council and draws thousands of union members and their families to the park.

In the recently-concluded session of the Oregon Legisla-

ture, lawmakers narrowly passed Senate Bill 1049, a bill said to help shore up the retirement system's finances. However, it also results in a loss of between 7 to 12.5% in workers' individual retirement accounts.

Democrats hold super-majorities in both the House and Senate, and Gov. Kate Brown is a Democrat. Under extreme pressure from Democratic leadership, the bill passed by one vote in both the House and Senate. The 'aye' votes were cast by union-endorsed candi-

dates, many of whom promised on the campaign trail not to cut PERS benefits. The governor promised as well.

In the wake of that vote, delegates to the Northwest Oregon Labor Council passed a motion July 22 to not invite any of those lawmakers on stage to speak during a special political event at 1 p.m. Several delegates at the monthly meeting argued that the politicians shouldn't be invited to the picnic at all, but it didn't have enough support to pass.



Members of Machinists Local Lodge 1432 at C-TRAN pose in front of a giant banner that declares the Vancouver, Washington-based transit agency "Best in the Nation!" Standing from left to right are Gabby Soltero, Ed Somotes, John Peters, Jerry Storie, Eino Suomi Jr., Matt Whiley, Brett Nold, Raymond Spaulding, and shop steward Tim Garrett. Kneeling from left to right are Jacob Anderson and chief shop steward David White. Lodge 1432 represents approximately 60 workers at C-TRAN.

## CLARK COUNTY

# C-TRAN named North American mid-sized 'Transit System of the Year'

Congratulations to C-TRAN and its front line workers — members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757 and Machinists Lodge 1432—for being named the top mid-sized transit system in North America.

The honor was announced last month as part of the annual American Public Transportation Association (APTA) awards.

ATU represents approximately 330 fixed-route bus operators, paratransit operators, ad-

ministrative assistants, customer service reps, supervisors, and paratransit dispatchers at C-TRAN. The Machinists Union represents about 60 field service workers, facility maintenance workers, and bus mechanics.

As winner, C-TRAN was judged among other systems with a total ridership between 4 million and 20 million trips per year. C-TRAN tallied about 6.2 million total trips in 2018.

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# U.S. House passes Butch Lewis Act

The bill would give federal loans to union multiemployer pension plans to prevent their collapse.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed HR 397 July 24 on a bipartisan vote of 264-169. All 235 House Democrats voted for the bill, as did 29 Republicans. The bill now moves to the Senate, where it faces a difficult road.

HR 397, formally the Rehabilitation for Multiemployer Pensions Act of 2019, protects the benefits union retirees have earned by providing low-inter-

est loans and other assistance to troubled multiemployer pension plans, giving them time to recover their losses and repay the loans.

Sponsors of the legislation note that of the nearly 10 million people nationwide covered by union-sponsored multiemployer plans, about 1.3 million of them are in plans that are quickly running out of money. Among the troubled plans are Western States Office and Professional Employees Pension Fund (members of

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