

2019 Scrooge of the Year: BURGERVILLE

Contributors to Portland Jobs with Justice named Burgerville “Scrooge of the Year” for 2019. The dishonor—part of the group’s annual fundraising holiday party—is named for Ebenezer Scrooge, the cold-hearted miser at the heart of Charles Dickens’ novella “A Christmas Carol.” Supporters of the local workers’ rights group donate, and each dollar buys a vote. This year’s event raised over \$5,000.

Burgerville has twice been nominated for Scrooge of the Year, but this year, the fast food chain won the most votes for its record of firing union supporters and

stonewalling union negotiations. Workers at five of the chain’s locations have voted to unionize as an affiliate of

Industrial Workers of the World, but negotiations over a first contract have now dragged on for more than 18 months without resolution.

At the Dec. 14 party, a worker from Burgerville’s Hawthorne store talked about how hard it is to live a dignified life while earning minimum wage.

“In the face of their public marketing about ‘serving with love,’ that made them stand out,” Portland Jobs with Justice Executive Director Will Layng told the Labor Press.



Labor Commissioner Val Hoyle to TriMet: Don’t eliminate apprenticeships!

It didn’t sit well with Oregon Labor Commissioner Val Hoyle. Since union contract bargaining began in October, TriMet has been proposing to scrap its bus and light rail maintenance mechanic training programs. Hoyle was elected with union support last year to head Oregon’s Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI), and part of that agency’s responsibility is to oversee and promote apprenticeship programs.

On Dec. 11, Hoyle turned up during the public comment section of a meeting of the TriMet board of directors to ask that the agency drop that proposal.

“I don’t generally weigh in other government’s collective bargaining processes,” Hoyle told commissioners. “But I was shocked to see your successful apprenticeship program put on the table as a bargaining chip, as if job training is something that only benefits workers.”

“You’re proposing to eliminate a program that produces highly qualified employees for middle



Oregon Labor Commissioner Val Hoyle asked the TriMet board to drop a proposal to end its bus and light rail mechanic apprentice training program.

to high wage jobs that you have difficulty filling,” Hoyle said. “And yours is one of the most diverse programs in the state.”

According to BOLI, 23% of TriMet’s current apprentices are people of color and 13% are women. Union workers in low-skill, low-wage bus cleaning positions see the training program as a pathway to a better life. Fifty-six apprentices are currently enrolled in TriMet’s apprenticeship programs, and when they complete it, they’ll earn wages averaging \$34.98 an hour as journeyman rail technicians, heavy duty bus mechanics, and

plant maintenance mechanics.

Hoyle’s comments got no reaction from TriMet board members or general manager Doug Kelsey. TriMet is a tax-and-fare-supported public transit agency serving Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties. Its unelected board is appointed by the governor.

On Dec. 14, Hoyle launched an online petition, using the email list assembled by her political campaign. The message is simple “Tell TriMet: Don’t Eliminate Apprenticeships!” Union supporters can sign the online petition at valhoyle.com/trimetpetition.

Happy Holidays

from the Portland Diamond Project

Sign the petition to bring Major League Baseball to Oregon and build a ballpark that runs on union labor:

PortlandDiamondProject.com/LaborAgreement

Thank you, union members, for your support.

