

SAVE THE POSTAL SERVICE



Oregon Congressman Earl Blumenauer (left) listened to mail delivery horror stories from residents, business owners and postal workers in North Portland's 97217 zip code during a postal forum Jan. 25. Customers complained about late mail, missing mail, and mail delivered to the wrong address, while postal workers told him of ever-changing routes, long hours, and exposure to a variety of safety issues. It all started, they said, about the same time the U.S. Postal Service launched a pilot project called "Consolidated Casing," an experiment to speed up mail carriers and decrease the number of routes. It has done just the opposite, as Blumenauer heard over and over. "This entire experience has been a huge frustration for us, and to see it happen at the expense of our dedicated and hard-working carriers is an extreme disappointment," said Rachel Browning, representing the Kenton Business Association. "Mail delivery needs to be secure and safe, not haphazard as it appears to be at this time," said another resident. Many in the audience of more than 50 people feared it was an attempt to privatize the postal service. The Consolidated Casing experiment is taking place at 65 locations around the country. Blumenauer called it "an ill-advised scheme," noting that the postal service is one of the most popular federal agencies. "This is important, because it's one of those areas that actually brings people together. This doesn't need to be partisan, unless you're with some of the folks who want to streamroll over privacy concerns and who want to privatize the post office." Blumenauer said he will use the information he heard at the forum, "to put more pressure, to put a spotlight to hold the postal service accountable."

...Clark College faculty win big gains in two-day strike

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union will push for that percentage to continue to rise until it reaches at least 85%.

"The ultimate result," Southerland said, "will be faculty who can commit more of their life to students at one institution, have more academic freedom, and be more a part of the bargaining unit."

Clark College, a public community college, serves about 9,000 students at its Vancouver campus. CCAHE, an affiliate of the Washington Education Association (WEA), represents about 190 full-time and 360 part-time faculty there. Clark isn't the region's first institution to agree to link adjunct pay to full-time, Southerland said. The Evergreen State College in Olympia does

so, and in December, Portland Community College instructors ratified an agreement that will pay part-timers 70% of the full-timer rate by Fall 2022.

Southerland said Clark's win may inspire other academic unions to similarly push back against the erosion of full-time permanent teaching.

"The strength and solidarity our union showed going on strike in the snow, in the dark, in the rain ... I think that's what got us the contract. The community and the administration saw we were serious and totally determined to get this done."

The two sides won't have much time to rest and enjoy the new accord: The contract they signed expires June 30, 2020, and they'll likely begin bargaining the next one in a few months.



Union construction workers at Raimore Construction pose for photo with owner Jeff Moreland, Federal Transportation Administration Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams, and TriMet General Manager Doug Kelsey.

Transit project awarded to union DBE contractor

Dozens of union construction workers from Raimore Construction joined union leaders and local, state, regional and federal officials at a press conference Jan. 23 in Southeast Portland at which TriMet announced the start of the Division Transit Project.

TriMet hired Raimore Construction to be the general contractor on the project, which will bring a high-capacity bus rapid transit line between downtown Portland's Central Business District and Gresham along a 15-mile stretch of Division Street. Raimore is a minority-owned contractor based in Northeast Portland. The company is signatory with Iron Workers Local 29, Operating Engineers Local 701, Laborers Local 737, Cement

Masons Local 555, and the Carpenters Union.

The construction portion of the \$175 million Division Transit Project is estimated at \$60 to \$65 million, and is the largest Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) contract issued in Oregon history, TriMet said. It is expected to create 650 construction jobs and more than 780 indirect and induced jobs, and add more than \$137.7 million in economic value in the corridor.

Key features include a new bus line to accommodate 60-foot-long articulated buses that have three doors for quicker boarding, room for 60 percent more riders, and space for bikes; construction of 42 transit stations with 83 platforms, and upgraded

rider amenities.

"The Division Transit Project is about community—connecting and servicing a diverse community," said Jeff Moreland, owner of Raimore. "This project is about the pride that comes with being given a real opportunity and being believed in. This project is about economic empowerment and career development through employment. This project is about a company that represents the community, working in the community, in order to serve the community. At Raimore, we don't do minority participation and inclusion, we actually are minority participation and inclusion."

The Division Transit Project is expected to open by Fall 2022.

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