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IN THIS ISSUE

SAY THEIR NAMES A list of workers who died on the job in Oregon in 2019. | Page 5

JEFF MERKLEY TALKS COVID-19 Why we can't seem to get masks and testing. | Page 6

Meeting Notices p.6

Unionists running for office p.4

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WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY



Workers Memorial Day is observed every year on April 28. It's a day to honor workers who have died on the job, to remember the suffering experienced by families and workers in all trades, and to recommit to the fight for a safe and healthy work environment for all workers.

REMEMBERING OREGON WORKERS WHO DIED ON THE JOB

The Oregon AFL-CIO will hold its annual memorial service in observance of Workers Memorial Day on Tuesday, April 28 at noon. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the ceremony will be held as an online video and will feature remarks from union leaders and safety and health advocates. The memorial service will include a reading of the names of Oregon workers that suffered fatalities on the job in 2019. RSVP to <https://actionnetwork.org/events/2020-workers-memorial-day>. You will receive a link to join the video service.

PORTLAND — The Northwest Oregon Labor Council typically holds a memorial service at its monthly delegates meeting, at which delegates raise an American flag in honor of each Oregon worker who died on the job the previous year. But because of COVID-19, the meeting and service are canceled.

ICTSI refuses to accept \$19 million from ILWU and will seek new trial

Philippine multinational ICTSI said March 20 it won't accept a judge's ruling that ILWU must pay it \$19.1 million in economic damages, arguing that's too small. In November, a jury directed ILWU to pay \$93.6 million to ICTSI for the economic harm caused by a sustained dock-worker slowdown at Port of Portland Terminal 6. But on March 5, the federal judge in the case determined that the \$93.6 million figure was based on flawed assumptions, and ruled that \$19.1 million was the maximum amount sustainable by the proof.

Judge Michael Simon gave ICTSI the option to reject that and seek a new trial that would focus only on deciding the right amount of damages, not whether ILWU was at fault. The worker slowdown was found to be illegal under the anti-union 1947 Taft-Hartley law because it was intended to put pressure a separate employer, the Port of Portland. ILWU wanted the Port to assign jobs plugging and unplugging refrigerated containers to ILWU members. No date has been set yet for the new trial.

UNEMPLOYED? HELP IS OUT THERE Weekly workshops are being held to help union members navigate benefits. Details at orafcio.org/covid19members.

Pandemic effects ripple across the construction industry

By Don McIntosh

Should I stay or should I go? Across the building trades, opinions vary about whether to stay working or stay at home in the midst of a pandemic.

"Half the members are reaching out to say, 'Keep the jobs open any way you can,'" says Laborers Local 737 Business Manager Zach Culver. "The other half say, 'Why are we still working?'"

'Essential' workers

In Washington, numerous construction projects were shut down by order of Gov. Jay Inslee. His March 23 emergency declaration requires every Washingtonian to stay at home through May 4 unless they're out to get food, medical care, or exercise — except for those deemed "Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers." Those include workers in the health care, food, energy, water, and transportation sectors, plus construction in those sectors and housing. That meant construction projects like office buildings and entertainment were put on hold.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown's stay-home order, meanwhile,

banned gatherings and closed 32 types of businesses where social distancing is impossible. But it left construction unaddressed, leaving it up to the contractor or project owner to decide whether to shut down temporarily. Most owners and contractors have kept projects going, and most workers have remained on the job.

"What we're telling our membership is: 'It's your choice,'" Local 737's Culver told the *Labor Press*.

"Whatever you choose to do, Local 737 will have your back," Culver wrote in a letter to members, "whether you're sheltering in place or continuing to build the Northwest."

Union members have the right to decide for themselves

That's been the pattern across the union building trades. IBEW and the signatory electrical contractor group NECA signed a nationwide agreement March 16 that says no adverse action will be taken against any employee who refuses to be present at a jobsite if they believe there is imminent danger of contracting coronavirus.



STRANGE NEW CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT: Because construction sites typically lack running water for hand-washing, Hoffman Construction is constructing and setting up its own hand-washing stations.

"If you choose not to work during this time, that's your decision," Bricklayers Local 1 Business Manager Matt Eleazer told members in a March 24 letter. "We understand that many members have reasons that they can't work, or simply don't want to leave home at this time. If that's your case, Local 1 supports you. We also understand that there are many members who are willing to work through the crisis. And again, if that's your case, Local 1 supports you."

Journeyman bricklayer Kirstie Brown says she wants to work. She's got three kids to support, and a disabled father at home on dialysis, and she hadn't yet recovered from the winter layoff season when she was laid off from a job as the epidemic hit.

"I'm responsible for all the bills," Brown said. "I can wear face masks."

Staying safe on the job

For some building trades workers, like crane and heavy ma-

chine operators who work solo in enclosed cabs, maintaining the recommended 6-foot distance is doable. For others, it's challenging or impossible. To prevent injury, the Bricklayers Local 1 contract says moving 70-pound blocks into place is a job that requires two workers. But it can't be done by workers who are 6 feet apart. The same is true for lots of other tasks throughout the trades, like when laborers pour concrete. Workers who can't keep a distance are wearing masks or bandanas for protection.

To keep workers on the job and honor commitments to safety, union construction contractors are changing job sites in lots of ways.

Ness Campbell Crane president John Anderson has been filling up spray bottles with house-made disinfectant in the office and delivering them to job sites so workers can wipe down surfaces. When the pandemic hit, Ness Campbell even purchased a van to shuttle operators from Intel's off-site parking lot, to get them out of shuttle buses.

Hoffman Construction vice