

UNION DEMOCRACY

Lou Christian re-elected as business manager of UA Local 290

Work is booming in the local, drawing over 700 travelers from other locals to meet demand.

By Don McIntosh

Lou Christian was elected to a second three-year term as business manager of 4,640-member United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 290, in mail ballots counted Dec. 15. Christian campaigned on continuing to improve the local's finances and promoting diversity, and outpolled challenger W. Paul Elder by 272 to 241.

Christian said a proposed by-laws change is likely to go to members in 2021 that would put the local on better financial footing. The current dues structure hasn't been adjusted since 1989, and is based on wages, but benefits have roughly doubled since then as a portion of the total compensation package. Right now most journeymen in Local 290 make \$47.43 an hour plus \$32.83 an hour in pension, health and other fringe benefits, for a total of \$80.26 an hour.



Lou Christian

Christian, 63, has been a Local 290 member since Jan. 9, 1979, and has served the union as officer or staff since 1991. As business manager, he's responsible for negotiating and enforcing collective bargaining agreements and helping secure work for members, directing 13 business agents and seven support staff at six locations around Oregon.

Despite talk of a possible recession, Christian says the work picture looks good in the near future, and signatory contractors are still bidding on new projects. In fact there's so much

work right now that members (including over 600 apprentices) are at full employment, and more than 750 UA members from other locals are working as travelers in Local 290's jurisdiction. Local 290's jurisdiction covers most of Oregon, three Southwest Washington counties, and Humboldt and Del Norte County in California.

Most Local 290 members are covered under a master agreement with the union-signatory Plumbing and Mechanical Contractors Association of Oregon (PMCA), which expires March 31, 2023. Local 290 also represents members at the Portland shipyards and at smaller units where they maintain facilities at the City of Portland, Port of Portland, City of Vancouver, and a handful of other public employers.

Because of COVID-19, Local 290 hasn't had an official in-person union meeting since February 2020, though it has held informational meetings online.

Besides business manager

(Local 290's top elected office), members also elected other officers:

President Bobby Porter outpolled Kevin Fanning 300-175

Vice President John Foote (unopposed)

Recording Secretary Jacob Cooper

Inside Guard Irais Gandarilla

Finance Committee Robert Smithline and Chris McNicholas. (no other candidate was nominated, so the president will appoint a third member.)

Executive Board Denny Tynan and Steve Rossetto, Region 1; and Brad Archuleta, Region 2. (No candidate was nominated for Region 3, so the president will appoint someone.)

Examining Board Ashley Haysom and Bill Hannan (Pipefitting); Rebecca Greiff and Rob May (Plumbing); Eric Fanning and Erv Garrison (HVAC/R); Dave Rinaldi and Andrew William Hollenbeck (Oil Burner); and Ryan Garvey and Bill Duke (Metal Trades)

Members also elected delegates to the UA international convention. Currently that's scheduled for August 2021 in San Diego.

Washington AFL-CIO's April Sims tapped for State Redistricting Commission

Washington State Labor Council Secretary Treasurer April Sims has been appointed to the Washington State Redistricting Commission.



April Sims

The announcement was made earlier in December by House Speaker Laurie Jinkins (D-Tacoma).

The Redistricting Commission is tasked with redrawing Washington's legislative and congressional district boundaries every 10 years following the completion of the U.S. Census.

"I am honored to be the first woman of color and Black person appointed to serve on Washington's Redistricting Commission," Sims said. "I look forward to working with my fellow commissioners to develop a process that is fair, transparent, inclusive, and in line with the values of our state."



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