

UNION DEMOCRACY

Myers re-elected to represent Building Trades

Construction work is booming. The challenge is to capture the billions still in the pipeline.

By Don McIntosh

Leaders of one of the Portland area's most active and influential labor organizations took the oath of office Jan. 5 on a new three-year term after uncontested elections last month. Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council coordinates the efforts of 27 construction union affiliates in order to secure better wages and working conditions for about 20,000 union members and grow both the amount of construction work and the union share of the work.

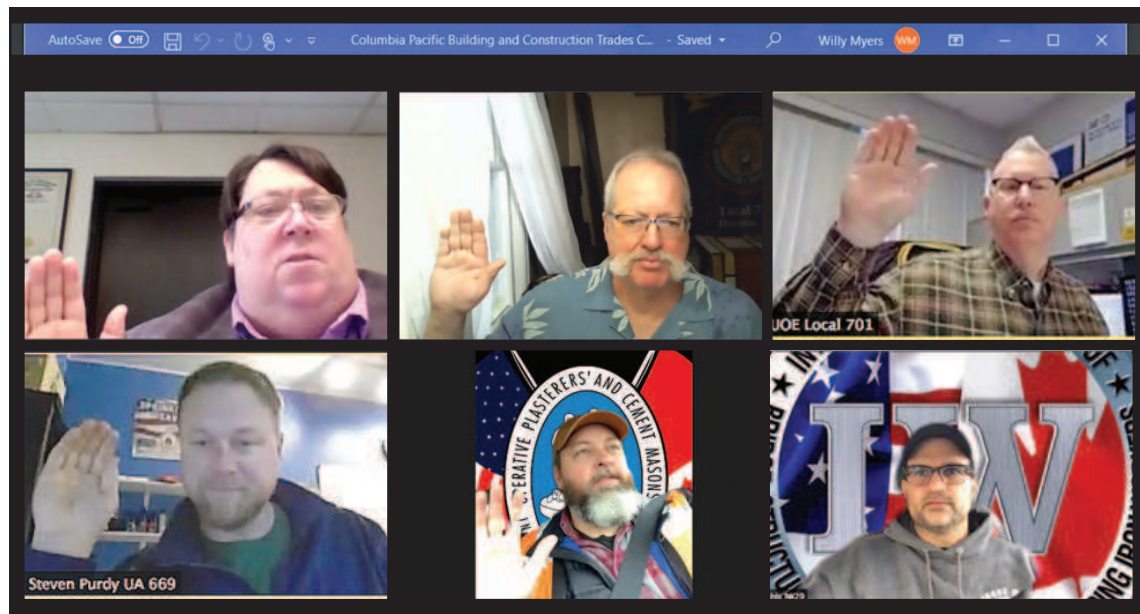
At its center is Willy Myers, 51, the organization's sole full-time employee. On the ground floor of the union-sponsored Kirkland Union Manor senior housing complex at Southeast 86th and Powell, Myers shares an office and an office manager (Corrina Coryell) with the council's statewide counterpart, Oregon Building Trades Council.

Myers keeps a busy schedule, meeting with public officials, project owners, developers, union officials, and community allies. Often that involves getting into the nitty gritty of negotiations over complex project labor agreements (PLAs) — agreements by project owners and general contractors to employ union labor across multiple crafts. In return, there's an expectation that construction unions can supply the skilled and trained workers needed for big jobs. Increasingly, the agreements also help project owners and contractors achieve goals for participation of women and minority workers.

"Our workforce needs to be reflective of the communities we live in," Myers tells the *Labor Press*.

For Myers to sign any PLA on behalf of the council, it must be approved by the national organization, North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU).

Getting commitments from project owners to employ union labor—or at least give union bidders a fair playing field—is Myers' core focus, along with negotiating the resulting PLAs and similar deals known as



SWEARING IN BY ZOOM At the Jan. 5 meeting of the Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council, newly re-elected officers took the oath of office. Top row from left are Executive Secretary Willy Myers (Sheet Metal Local 16); President Bob Carroll (IBEW Local 48); and Vice President Nate Stokes (Operating Engineers Local 701). Bottom row from left are sergeant-at-arms Steven Purdy (UA Sprinklerfitters Local 669) and trustees Geoff Kossak (Cement Masons Local 555) and Shane Nehls (Ironworkers Local 29). Russ Garnett (Roofers Local 49), also elected trustee, was sworn in Jan. 12.

community benefits agreements (CBAs).

Myers counts a number of recent examples as successes, including Multnomah County's new courthouse and health department headquarters and the ilani Casino Resort in Ridgefield, Wash. Work is also in progress at the 1,500-acre Lund Hill solar project in Klickitat, Wash., a new 14-story hotel at the ilani Casino, a new wastewater treatment plant for Portland, and the massive Broadway Corridor redevelopment.

"Union organizers organize members and shops," says Myers, himself a former organizer with Sheet Metal Local 16. "I try to organize the work."

The crown jewel of those agreements is about to be completed. It's a deal Myers calls "C2P2," shorthand for the Construction Careers Pathways Project. C2P2 is an effort by the Metro regional government to create a model CBA that local governments throughout the region would use, harmonizing "high-road" contracting and workforce standards throughout the region.

Myers has served as the Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council's executive secretary since 2014, and C2P2 may represent the culmination of much of his work. Myers estimates the region is going to see \$12 billion organizable construction work in the next three years. A top priority for Myers will be to complete and implement C2P2 and then pitch it to other public bodies that haven't yet signed on.

Every Tuesday at 10 a.m., Myers gives a detailed report on all work to several dozen delegates. The high-spirited meet-

ings are chaired by president Bob Carroll. Mayors, county chairs, and commissioners are regular guests.

Myers works hard to develop and maintain relationships with elected officials. Sometimes that means supporting an embattled politician who kept his promises to the building trades, like Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, who was narrowly re-elected in November after a last-minute surge in help from unions and other groups. Other times it means backing a challenger: Building trades support for Lacey Beaty

may have made the difference in her successful challenge to Denny Doyle for Beaverton mayor.

If there's one thing Myers wishes the public understood better about building trades unions, it's that in practice they enjoy a symbiotic relationship with employers.

"Sure, negotiations are always adversarial, and everybody's always broke when you're asking for money, but for the most part we do collaborate closely with the companies that employ our members."



Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council is the largest of six local building trades councils in Oregon. Its jurisdiction is Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington, Columbia, Clatsop, Tillamook, Wasco, Sherman, Hood River, and upper Yamhill counties in Northwest Oregon; and Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat counties in Southwest Washington.

AFFILIATES

- BOILERMAKERS LOCAL 242
- BRICKLAYERS LOCAL 1
- CEMENT MASONS LOCAL 555
- ELECTRICIANS LOCAL 48
- ELEVATOR CONSTRUCTORS LOCAL 23
- GLASSWORKERS LOCAL 740
- HEAT & FROST INSULATORS LOCAL 36
- IRONWORKERS LOCAL 29
- IRONWORKERS LOCAL 516
- LABORERS DISTRICT COUNCIL
- LABORERS LOCAL 335
- LABORERS LOCAL 483
- LABORERS LOCAL 737
- LINOLEUM LAYERS LOCAL 1236
- OPEIU LOCAL 11
- PAINTERS DISTRICT COUNCIL 5
- PAINTERS LOCAL 10
- PLASTERERS LOCAL 82
- PLUMBERS & STEAMFITTERS 290
- PLUMBERS & STEAMFITTERS 598
- ROOFERS LOCAL 49
- SPRINKLER FITTERS LOCAL 669
- SHEET METAL WORKERS LOCAL 16
- TEAMSTERS JOINT COUNCIL 37
- TEAMSTERS LOCAL 162
- TEAMSTERS LOCAL 58



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