

PEOPLE

New workforce liaison at Oregon AFL-CIO

Josh Hall, who was president of United Steelworkers Local 7150, started March 8 as the new workforce labor liaison at the Oregon AFL-CIO. Paid for by a federal grant, the liaison leads “rapid response” meetings to help dislocated union workers get unemployment and other benefits, and helps recruit union representatives to serve on the workforce



Josh Hall

boards that guide how federal training funds are spent.

Hall himself experienced lay-off several times over his 27 years at ATI’s Albany, Oregon, titanium plant, also known as Oremet. A union safety coordinator at the plant, he was one of the last workers remaining after the plant’s closure in December.

Hall replaces **John Irvine**, who left to take a job as an organizer for Machinists District Lodge W24.

Leadership change at Portland JWJ

Will Layng is leaving his position as executive director of Portland Jobs With Justice March 31 after nearly four years and returning to Service Employees International Union (SEIU), where he formerly worked as organizing director for the property services division of Local 49.

Portland JwJ co-chair **Lisa Hubbard** will step in as interim executive director while a permanent successor is found.

With a staff of three, Portland JwJ is a coalition that includes 108 union and community or-

ganizations; it advocates for workers rights and supports worker struggles.

Hubbard, former organizing director at SEIU Local 503, is a career union campaigner who worked for SEIU and UFCW in California and for the AFL-CIO in North Carolina. Her most recent position was as coordinator of the Healthy Communities Coalition, which negotiated a community benefits agreement for the Broadway Corridor redevelopment project.

Layng’s new assignment at SEIU will be to develop a regional non-profit training and education fund for janitors and other property services workers.

Unionist seeking House seat falls short

Multnomah County Commission on March 23 appointed **Andrea Valderrama** as state representative for House District 47 in outer east Portland, passing over union nurse and former union president **Adrienne Enghouse**, and one other applicant, climate activist Robin Castro. The three were put forward by Democratic Party precinct committee persons as potential replacements for Democrat Diego Hernandez, who resigned March 15 following sexual harassment allegations. Valderrama herself filed a restraining order against Hernandez last year for threatening behavior.

Valderrama is board chair of David Douglas School District, policy director at ACLU Oregon, and a former policy adviser to Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler. Her campaign for the legislative appointment had the backing of Service Employees International Union Local 49, but some members of the Northwest Oregon Labor Council’s Executive Board

representing education unions expressed concerns about Valderrama’s stance as school board chair favoring the elimination of seniority rights for workers.

Of the three finalists, only Enghouse sought support from the Labor Council. The Board consensus was to lobby for her appointment to HD 47.

However, the Oregon AFL-CIO is the body that makes official endorsement decisions for state-level office, and it made no endorsement among the candidates, though it did earlier call for Hernandez to resign.

Enghouse, a nurse at Kaiser Permanente, lost her re-election bid as president of Oregon Nurses and Health Professionals last April. A graduate of the union-backed Oregon Labor Candidates School, she sought appointment to the Senate District 24 seat last year after it was vacated by Shemia Fagan. The appointment went to former Unite Oregon director Kayse Jama.

County Commissioners spoke highly of all three nominees, but in the end voted unanimously to appoint Valderrama.

WORKERS RIGHTS

Labor Council calls Integrated Power Services ‘unfair’

Delegates to the Northwest Oregon Labor Council (NOLC) voted unanimously March 22 to place Integrated Power Services (IPS) on the council’s “Unfair List.” That means the local AFL-CIO is asking that supporters not do business with the company. IPS repairs electric motors and generators at more than two dozen locations in the United States and Canada, including one at NW 21st and York in the Northwest Industrial Area of Portland, where 15 workers are jointly represented by International Association of Machinists (IAM) District Lodge W24 and Boilermakers Local 104 as part of the Metal Trades Council of Portland and Vicinity.

IAM District Lodge W24 representative Bob Petroff requested the unfair listing on the grounds that IPS failed to bargain in good faith over a new

agreement. The Metal Trades Council makes a similar allegation in an unfair labor practice charge filed March 11 with the National Labor Relations Board.

The previous contract—which covers 15 workers at the Portland location—expired Oct. 1, 2020 and IPS presented what it called its final offer Jan. 22, 2021. Heeding the bargaining team’s recommendation, workers rejected it in a 10-1 vote March 20 and then voted unanimously to authorize a strike.

Petroff says one key sticking point is IPS’ refusal to pay overdue raises retroactively, which is a standard feature in union contract settlements. The two sides are also 0.25% apart on their wage proposals. Petroff says IPS also unilaterally increased what employees contribute to health insur-

ance—without the agreement of the union or its members.

Pay currently starts at \$22.09 and rises as high as \$30.42 or \$33.13 depending on the job and skill level.

Mark DuBose, IPS vice president of human resources, appeared before an executive session of the NOLC board to argue that they should not receive the “unfair” designation, and said he takes pride in the relationships IPS has with all unions. But the board recommended the listing anyway. The listing continues until the two sides reach agreement. IPS is currently the only employer on NOLC’s Unfair List.

Depending on further progress in talks, the unfair listing may next advance to the state and national AFL-CIO.

The two sides were next scheduled to meet for negotiations April 2.

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NLRB drops Trump rule that would have blocked graduate student unions

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) announced March 12 that it is withdrawing a nearly-final Trump-era rule that aimed to block stu-

dent teaching assistants from forming unions. The decision returns to an Obama-era policy under which the NLRB said student workers at private colleges and universities have the right to unionize.

Trump appointees to the NLRB declared in September

2019 that student teaching assistants are not employees under the National Labor Relations Act because their relationships to their schools are primarily educational. But the rule implementing that change had not yet taken effect.

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