

The Stand: boosting labor and labor's story

Washington's only news outlet dedicated to unions and working people, The Stand just turned 10.

By Don McIntosh

There's almost nothing else like it anywhere in the nation: Five days a week, for free, an email newsletter goes out to anyone who wants it with all the most recent labor news from Washington state and "that Washington." Known as The Stand, it's published by the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC), AFL-CIO.

WSLC communications director David Groves spends four to six hours a day working on it. He starts as early as 4 a.m. every

weekday, scouring every daily newspaper in Washington—plus a handful of national publications—on the hunt for labor news. At 10 a.m. it goes out to nearly 6,000 subscribers. They get a calendar of union events, links and summaries of each news story from a union point of view, plus one or two original reports authored by Groves.

The Stand isn't dry. There's a voice, a sense of humor, dollops of ridicule for those who deserve it, and every Friday, a music video reflecting



David Groves, the 'entire staff' of The Stand, lives on Bainbridge Island and takes the ferry to WSLC headquarters in Seattle.

the eclectic tastes Groves has developed as a self-described vinyl junkie.

On May 1, The Stand marked 10 years of publication.

"It was born out of frustration at the lack of coverage that unions were getting in the commercial press," Groves says, looking back. "As communications director, part of my job has been to get union news out there, to

get the general public to see what we're up to and what we stand for."

NATIONAL

White House task force will promote union organizing

President Joe Biden wants to make it clear: He's not neutral when it comes to unions.

"It is the policy of my administration to encourage worker organizing and collective bargaining," Biden declared in an April 26 executive order.

Officially federal labor law is supposed to encourage collective bargaining, but as the Biden

order points out, "in the past few decades, the federal government has not used its full authority to promote and implement this policy of support for workers organizing unions and bargaining collectively with their employers."

Biden's executive order sets up a Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment,

headed by Vice President Kamala Harris, and made up of two dozen Cabinet members and top administration officials. Within 180 days, they're supposed to recommend executive branch policies and programs that could promote worker power, worker organizing, and collective bargaining.

UNION DEMOCRACY

Boilermakers Local 242 elect new leadership

Brent Stephens won election as business manager of Boilermakers Local 242,



Brent Stephens

out-polling Scott Widdicombe and Luka Bender in ballots counted April 9. Stephens, 50, joined Local 242 in 2000. He served as

steward and training center instructor, and was appointed assistant business manager by business manager Luke Lafley in 2019. Lafley left to accept a job at the international. Stephens will serve the remaining two years of his three-year term.

Headquartered in Spokane, Local 242 represents 364 workers in Oregon, Eastern Washington and Idaho who build, maintain and repair boilers, tanks, and pressure vessels. Journeyman pay is currently \$39.46 an hour, plus \$31.33 an hour for health, retirement, vacation, and training benefits. — DM

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