

UNION DEMOCRACY



Russ Garnett re-elected at Roofers Local 49

In union election ballots counted July 6, Russ Garnett was re-elected as business agent of Roofers Local 49, outpolling challenger James Hale by a wide margin. Business agent is the local's top office and a full-time position, responsible for negotiating and enforcing contracts and growing the union share of the industry.

Garnett, 56, has served as business agent since 2011, during what has been a boom time in the local construction industry. Over that time, journeyman compensation rates at Local 49 have risen \$21 an hour, Garnett said. Journeymen roofers currently make \$37.43 an hour plus \$19.49 for health, pension and other benefits.

Local 49 represents 654 members employed by a

dozen union-signatory roofing contractors, and is looking to recruit more. Roofing work can be somewhat seasonal, tapering off in the rainy winter months, but Garnett says journeyman average 1,600 hours a year, or roughly 9 months at full-time. Union roofing contractors have the majority of local market share in commercial and industrial sectors.

Also elected were:

President Snuffy Jones

Vice President Ray Carpenter Jr.

Recording Secretary Darrell Hopkins Sr.

Warden Jim Breneman

Executive Board Ray Carpenter, Travis Hopkins, Ryan Hoover, Snuffy Jones, Rosa Hale, James Breneman, and Jason Barthel

All officers serve three year terms that run through June 30, 2024.

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Frito-Lay workers strike in Topeka

Tired of 84-hour workweeks and low pay, Bakers Local 218 members walk off the job.

At the Frito-Lay plant in Topeka, Kansas, low pay means short staffing, and short staffing means some workers face mandatory overtime, working 12-hour shifts seven days a week. On July 5, around 600 workers began a strike after rejecting the com-

pany's offer of a 60-hour workweek cap and a 2% wage increase in bargaining with Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers & Grain Millers Local 218. Wages at the plant start at \$16.33 an hour and can rise to \$38.42, depending on the job. The two sides agreed to meet for further negotiations July 19. Until then the strike will continue, with about four-fifths of workers reportedly participating.

New leader takes reins at Oregon AFSCME

At Oregon AFSCME's first and only online convention April 30-May 2, delegates from locals around the state elected top officers to lead the 24,000-member union the next two years. All officers ran unopposed. AFSCME stands for American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Longtime incumbent Oregon AFSCME president Jeff Klatke opted not to run for re-election, and was succeeded by Elizabeth Goetzinger, who is president of 430-member AFSCME Local 3580 at the Metro regional government. Goetzinger, 47, works in internal communications for Metro's chief executive officer. Born and raised in Texas, she moved to the Portland area in 1997 and went to work for Metro in 2006. She joined Local 3580 in 2007, and became a union steward in 2014, but her involvement deepened in 2015 when her daughter got sick.

"My family was in crisis and it was my union who was there for me," Goetzinger said, "to advocate for a flexible schedule, to advocate for a reduction of hours, beyond what could have been afforded to me under the contract."

When her daughter recovered, she decided to pay it back. She was elected president of the local, and served on Oregon AFSCME executive board.

Now, as president of Oregon AFSCME, Goetzinger says her priority will be to build an inclusive and strong union, and make sure all members have a sense of belonging.



Elizabeth Goetzinger, a project manager in the Communications department at Metro, ran unopposed and was elected president of 24,000-member Oregon AFSCME.

Oregon AFSCME president is a volunteer position, and Goetzinger remains employed at Metro. Outside work she spends time with her horse, her daughter Ceara, and her husband Phillip Goetzinger, a union carpenter.

Also elected:

First vice president Christy O'Neill (Local 2619)

Second vice president Charlie Peirson (Local 2805)

Treasurer Fred Yungbluth (Local 350)

Secretary Meredith Hickman (Local 3940)

Trustee Theresia Lloyd-Siemer (Local 328) and Sheryl Harrington (Local 2619)

—DM

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Paid for by John Blom for Vancouver | 4010 NE 157th Ave Vancouver, WA 98682 | Email: john@johnblom.com