

Marion-Polk-Yamhill Labor Chapter chooses four holiday projects

The **Marion-Polk-Yamhill Counties Central Labor Chapter (MPYCCLC)** won't hold its annual **Holiday Party at the Elsinore Theatre** again this year. Instead, leadership has chosen to support four regional projects this holiday season.

The Holiday Party was canceled last year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to that the Labor Chapter had hosted a party at the Elsinore Theatre in downtown Salem uninterrupted for 79 years.

MPYCCLC will make monetary donations to four projects and will encourage its constituent unions and allies to make donations and provide hands-on support. The projects are the **Labor of Love** effort sponsored by **Labor's Community Services Agency**, the **Christmas Family Adoption Program** in the Salem area, the **Oxford House Linfield Center** in McMinnville, and the **Keizer Business Alliance gift collection** effort that reaches families in the Keizer-St. Paul area.

The MPYCCLC is the regional alliance of AFL-CIO-affiliated unions. These unions have about 20,000 members in the three-county area. The leadership and activist team consists of Bob Rossi and Elissa Edge of the National Writers Union, Brent Halse of the Oregon School Employees Association, Jon Irvine of the Machinists Union, Rosalie Pedroza of Communication Workers of America, and Paige Parton of AFSCME.

The MPYCCLC also includes the Oregon chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU). CBTU functions as a voice and advocate for Black workers and their communities and does special work with people living in shelters in the Portland area. The MPYCCLC will support these efforts as they develop over the holiday period.

Labor's Community Services Agency is a long-established resource center for union members and their families who are facing difficult times. The Christmas Family Adoption Program is a non-profit that connects families in need to donors. The Oxford House Linfield Recovery Center was recently destroyed by a fire that displaced seven women and five children. Rebuilding the center will take a great deal of effort. The Keizer Business Alliance gift collection project asks for small donations and help in reaching children and families with presents for the holidays in the Keizer-St. Paul area. This project prioritizes veterans and their families, but past experience has shown that there is an overflow of donated gifts and that others can receive some limited help as well.

"Supporting these projects and our communities is a logical step for us," said Chapter Vice Chair Paige Barton. "...There is a great need for community solidarity here, and we are allying with our friends to build that solidarity and meet some of our community's needs over the coming holidays.

LCSA raising funds for annual Presents from Partners event

Holiday season is here, which means it's almost time for Presents From Partners, sponsored by Labor's Community Service Agency (LCSA).

In 2020, the agency saw an increased need within union families that could not be ignored. Many struggled due to the impact of the pandemic. In partnership with 50 unions, the Presents From Partners event transitioned from an in-person holiday party into a COVID-safe, delivery style model.

LCSA served 500 children with fun toys, stockings stuffed with goodies, a catered holiday meal, and a gift for their parents. Ninety volunteers pulled this off during the height of the pan-

demic. Now, a year later, LCSA finds that many are still in similar situations, and in need of assistance this holiday season.

Once again, LCSA and its union partners are prepared to make it happen. The event is funded entirely by donations from supporters of labor, the Northwest Oregon and Southwest Washington labor councils, and United Way of the Columbia Willamette.

If you are able, donate online at LCSAportland.org/donate or mail a check payable to Presents From Partners to Labor's Community Service Agency's office at 9955 SE Washington St #301, Portland, OR 97216.

POLITICS

UFCW Local 555 backs Kristof for governor

Oregon's biggest private sector union announced Nov. 15 that it will back a political newcomer for Oregon governor. Nicholas Kristof grew up in Yamhill, Oregon, spent the last 20 years writing for the *New York Times*, returned to Oregon in 2019, and announced a run for governor Oct. 27. The endorsement by 29,000-member United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 is his most significant so far.

Kristof, who has never run for public office before, is seeking the Democratic nomination in the May 17, 2022 primary election.

Also running as Democrats are state treasurer Tobias Read and Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek, who's been endorsed by the Oregon State

Building and Construction Trades Council. At one time Kotek might have been favored to win Local 555's endorsement as well, having helped pass priorities like the minimum wage increase, paid sick leave, and a law that requires fair scheduling practices at grocers and other large retailers. But in 2020 and 2021 Local 555 had zero success getting support from the governor or Legislature for its members who were on the front lines of the COVID epidemic. Gov. Kate Brown placed grocery workers dead last in line for immunization, after pregnant women and right before the general public. Local 555 asked Brown and legislative leaders to use federal COVID rescue funds to give bonuses to gro-

cery workers, and to expedite workers' comp claims for public-facing grocery workers if they contracted COVID, but got nowhere.

"Frankly our board felt, as I do, that it's foolish to support the politicians who praised essential workers during the pandemic while neglecting necessary worker protections," said Local 555 president Dan Clay in a press statement announcing the endorsement. Kristof spoke to Local 555's Executive Board, and Clay said he articulated a bold vision as well as plans to make it a reality.

"We don't need another four more years of the same policies that Kate Brown's been pushing, and it's the same people," Local 555 spokesperson Miles Eschaia told the *Labor Press*. —DM

Will Portland's plan for high-road jobs survive the pullout of Broadway Corridor developer?

By Don McIntosh

After spending almost two years negotiating a landmark agreement on the massive Broadway Corridor redevelopment project, a coalition of unions and community groups wants to know if that agreement still stands now that the lead developer has pulled out of the project.

The Broadway Corridor project is a planned mixed residential and commercial development on 16 city-owned blocks between Portland's Old Town/Chinatown and Pearl District neighborhoods, anchored on a now-closed postal processing facility. Members of the Healthy Communities Coalition were euphoric in September 2020 when Portland City Council approved the agreement they negotiated with its development agency Prosper Portland, which mandates living wage union jobs for workers and opportunities for women and minorities in both the construction and operation phases of the project.

But Continuum Partners of Denver was also a key party to the agreement. Continuum was selected in 2018 by Prosper Portland as adviser and lead developer on the project, beating out several local bidders. As part of the deal, Prosper



Portland paid Continuum \$70,000 a month to advise it on constructing its master development plan, and also gave Continuum first dibs on purchasing developable parcels from the City.

But in September 2021, Continuum announced it was withdrawing from the deal, citing a challenging real estate market environment and the complexities of the project. Based on emails obtained through a public records request, *The Oregonian* reported in October that Continuum pulled out because Prosper wouldn't agree to set a price in advance for all parcels that it would buy over time.

So what happens to the elaborate community benefits agreement that Continuum signed with the community coalition? Will the next developer Prosper Portland picks be

expected to abide by that agreement? Healthy Communities Coalition reached out to Prosper Portland management, but has yet to get a firm answer.

So on Nov. 10, the coalition sent Prosper Portland director Kimberly Branam and the Prosper Board a letter signed by 20 coalition members requesting an answer by Nov. 24. Union signers included Oregon AFSCME, IBEW Local 48, ProTec Local 17, Fire Fighters Local 43, Service Employees Local 49, UNITE HERE Local 8, Operating Engineers Local 701, and the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters. The Oregon Building Trades Council also endorsed the letter as part of the Metropolitan Alliance for Workforce Equity.

At press time, there'd been no response from Prosper Portland to the letter.