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UNION DEMOCRACY

New leadership at Machinists District Lodge W24

Wayne Thompson has retired, and Brandon Bryant and Will Lukens are the new top officers.

By Don McIntosh

Machinists District Lodge W24 has a new set of top leaders following recent retirements. Headquartered in Gladstone, Oregon, the lodge serves 12 locals totaling 8,800 members, from sawmill workers to automotive and aerospace machinists. Wayne Thompson retired Nov. 19 as the lodge's top officer, president and directing business representative, and was succeeded by Brandon Bryant. Business representative Will Lukens moves up to succeed Bryant in the number two position, assistant directing business representative. That followed the installation of Local 63 treasurer John Hall as W24's secretary-treasurer, to succeed Caryn Kaufmann, who retired. All the new officers will serve until the next union officer elections, scheduled for December 2022.

District Lodge W24 was created in 2011 via the merger of Machinists District Lodge 24 and Woodworkers District Lodge W1.

Brandon Bryant, 51, comes from the woodworker side. In 1993 he got a summer job at the Simpson Lumber Company mill in Tacoma. Born and raised in Tacoma, he'd earned associates degrees from North American Baptist College in Edmonton, Alberta, and from Tacoma Community College. His goal was to become a teacher.

"My plan was for it to be a temporary job while I finished up school," Bryant says. "But the union benefits paved the way to a great life. I got married and stayed on working there for 23 years. It helped provide a great life for my family, raised two kids on a good union salary."

Urged on by a steward, Bryant showed up to a union meeting and got active as a steward and bargaining team member in Local W-9, which later merged into W-157, and again into W-130.

"I realized that by getting involved I can have a big effect on other people and help their lives."

In 2014 he came on staff at the District Lodge as a full-time business rep, handling contracts in Washington and later Oregon. When Thompson became president of District Lodge W24 this February, he appointed Bryant as his number two.

Bryant lives in Federal Way, Washington, and will stay near Gladstone during the week. As a leader he plans to stay the course, and emphasize organizing, and serving members.

"I want to support other people to develop as much as they can. My job is to help everybody else, all the way down to local presidents."

As top officer, Bryant will represent the Machinists on the Oregon AFL-CIO executive council. He'll also chair a union health trust and two pension trusts.

Will Lukens, 52, is from the machinists side, and joined the union in 2003 when he got a job at Auto Truck Transport. Encouraged by union rep Bob Petroff, he became a steward and bargaining

team member in Local 63. In 2010 he came on staff and worked as an organizer. Over the next seven years, he learned first-hand how stacked the deck is when workers try to unionize and employers violate the law with impunity. At Eugene hunting bow manufacturer Bowtech, managers threatened to outsource to China. At airport baggage handling contractor ABM, the company fired the lead union supporter. And after a union win at aircraft painter CAPS, Boeing cancelled its contract and the operation shut down. Lukens did have wins as well, including the Bradken Foundry in Chehalis and a nursing home in Sunnyside, Washington. In 2016, he was named organizer of the year for the Machinists' western territory.

After seven years, he moved into serving as a business rep, responsible for negotiating and enforcing contracts.

He lives in Gresham with his wife Jill, who works as office manager of the *NW Labor Press*.

Both Bryant and Lukens have undergone extensive training at the William Winpisinger Center, the national union's training center in Maryland.



Brandon Bryant



Will Lukens

CORRECTIONS

In an article in our Nov. 19 issue about new leadership at AFSCME Local 88, we incorrectly listed the trustees as Shirley Bailey, Gordon Long, and Jeanne Ramsten. Those were the local's previous trustees. **Local 88's newly elected trustees are Jamie Christianson and Darlena Hale.**

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