

CAPSTONE CONSTRUCTION UNDER LABOR INVESTIGATION

Construction on Capstone's 13th and Olive student housing project is continuing, but representatives from the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters (PNWRCC) say that after complaints from workers employed by multiple contractors, the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) and other agencies are investigating the project.

"We had a lot of workers come forward complaining about unpaid overtime, checks being withheld, oftentimes for weeks or even a month at a time, and the various sanitary and safety complaints," PNWRCC spokesperson Ben Basom says. General contractor Construction Enterprises Inc. (CEI) of Franklin, Tenn., is overseeing the project, but Basom says that the ultimate responsibility falls on Capstone as the development owner.

According to Basom, the availability of adequate bathroom facilities was one problem. "The bathtubs in some of the units being used as toilets. People were urinating and defecating inside the bathrooms there," he says. "People were urinating inside the walls to avoid having to take bathroom breaks and things like that."

An orange flier posted around downtown asks unhappy workers on the Capstone project to call the local PNWRCC office at 344-5344. The flier asks workers if they were paid in cash, not paid overtime or denied breaks, and says "You may be owed money!"

Capstone's Eugene spokesperson, Pat Walsh, says, "Until late last week, Capstone and CEI were not aware of the union's allegations concerning subcontractors working on the site. The union has refused our request to review their report; however, Capstone and CEI do take the allegations seriously."

PNWRCC has received a lot of verbal complaints from workers who wish to remain anonymous and four or five formal written complaints, Basom says. "Oftentimes these workers work under a culture of fear," he says.

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MICHELE NORRIS

NPR'S RACE CARD PROJECT IN EUGENE

"Black man interrogated. White mom ignored," McKenzie Messer. "I don't exist for your curiosity," Gordon Nagayama Hall. "Where are you from? No. Really?" Alisa Caban.

NPR special correspondent Michele Norris' The Race Card project asks people to explore their thoughts about race, ethnicity and cultural identity in six words. Norris has been collecting these stories for three years and some have been heard, and the longer stories behind them told, on public radio's *Morning Edition*. Norris brings these stories to the University of Oregon on Nov. 13 and is asking Oregonians for their six-word stories.

Rita Radostitz of the UO's Division of Student Affairs says the impetus to bring Norris to campus stemmed from an R-G article on The Race Card Project last year. Radostitz says that Norris' talk and UO's participation in the project are part of a yearlong exploration of identity through the school's Center on Diversity and Community. Topics for the year will include race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and more, and a TEDxUOregon is planned for the spring with "ideas worth sharing" focusing on identity and creativity.

Radostitz says about 150 race cards have already been submitted, and the school is pushing for more. The UO currently has a page on theracecardproject.com with submissions. Radostitz wrote and posted two six-word stories of her own, "Parenting through a prism of race," and "This mother's eyes see race differently." Radostitz is the mother of twin daughters who are Ethiopian by birth, "so I am constantly having to take race into account in my parenting," she says.

Norris will speak 7 pm Wednesday, Nov. 13, at the UO's Erb Memorial Union Ballroom. The free tickets are sold out, but the event will be a livestream at the EMU, and there is a waiting list for possible tickets. Local NPR affiliate KLCC will simulcast Norris' appearance on OPB's *Think Out Loud* from the UO campus at noon.

To submit a race card go to wkly.ws/1m6, and to learn more about UO's "explore identity" project go to exploreidentity.uoregon.edu. — Camilla Mortensen

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