

## “Burtie” Awards expose contractors who rip off taxpayers

Concerned SEIU members and community supporters rallied on the Capitol steps in Salem on May 23 to expose abuses by private contractors funded by public dollars.

The biggest abusers received Halliburton, or “Burtie” awards, to highlight their role in gouging Oregon taxpayers for millions of dollars in unplanned and often unwarranted costs. We named these awards in honor of the Halliburton Company, which is under public scrutiny for its questionable use of hundreds of millions of federal dollars in Iraq.

“In Oregon, we have a well-trained workforce that takes pride in providing high-quality services. But practically every day, there is another story in the news about contractors abusing the system,” explains Sonya Reichwein, a Public Service Representative at the Albany Driver and Motor Vehicle field office and chair of the SEIU Responsible Contracting Committee. Here are a few of the “Burtie” Award recipients.

### The Revolving Door Award

*This award highlights cases of cozy dealing, where agency staff go to work for the contractors they should be overseeing.*

**Winner: ODOT’s Office of Project Delivery** In 2002, ODOT hired an engineer who had formerly worked for a design and engineering firm. During the three years this person was employed by ODOT, she steered two-thirds of ODOT’s environmental work to her former firm. She also was instrumental in awarding her former firm a \$5.3 million contract, and only one week after that contract was signed, she returned to work for the same contractor.

Source: Oregon Secretary of State Report No. 2006-34 (September 2006).

### The Rotten Fish Award

*This award highlights the difficulty agencies can get into when they try to get rid of a contractor that is not meeting expectations.*

**Winner: Vantage Learning** In attempting to comply with the Federal No Child Left Behind Act, the Oregon Department of Education contracted with Vantage Learning, a company that builds computer touchscreen testing systems. When errors in the system led to complaints and lost data, the State cancelled Vantage’s contract. In response, Vantage billed the State for an extra \$2.8 million.

Source: “Log Off and Grab a No. 2 Pencil,” Oregonian (March 13, 2007).

### The “They Break It, We Fix It” Award

*This award goes to contractors who run into trouble, and then walk away, leaving the State to fix problems and pick up the tab.*

**Winner: Accenture** In 2004, the Governor announced a \$1.7 million contract to consolidate 12 different data centers into one State Data Center. Later, that cost grew to more than \$11 million. Savings were projected to be \$10 million per year, which would more than pay for the consolidation. The company chosen to perform the work, Accenture, has a history of being removed from jobs in other states amid controversy over costs and performance. Accenture promised that the state would begin to see cost savings within 2 – 5 years, although they admitted they had never done a project like this. After making unrealistic claims in what staff referred to as “the \$2 million slide show,” Accenture was removed from the project and the remaining work done in-house.

Source: Oregon Secretary of State Report No. 2006-33 (September 2006).



State workers step up to the plate to fix problems created by contractors who are motivated by profit, not service. Pictured is Dennis Green from Employment who accepted the Accenture award.

## SEIU awards \$25,000 in scholarships

SEIU Local 503, OPEU awarded 40 scholarships totaling \$25,000 to members and their immediate family members this year. Our union offers awards of \$500 per school year to students entering school, and awards of \$750 per school year to students who are currently enrolled.

### \$750 Scholarship recipients / qualifying member:

Michael Bassett (Robert Bassett – DHS), Amanda Boice (Linda Boice – Employment), Amy Christy (Ann Christy – DHS), Lindy Clayton (Rebecca Cutsforth – Employment), Heather Conwell (Self – DOJ), Deidre Crowell (Self – DHS), Alyssa Elting (Self – DHS), Wende Glimpse (Richard Glimpse – DMV), Donna Harris (Self – PSU), Bryn Jansson (Kyle Jansson – Parks), Eric Leaming (Gary Leaming – ODOT), Daniel Newth (Twila Nesky – PSU), Jeremy Rayman (Kathy Lewis-Rayman – JCEA), Zachary Stark-MacMillan (David MacMillan – Water Resources), Kristen Stiegler (Don Stacy – OSLP), Theodore Sweeney (Kathleen Fishler – PSU), Heather Whisenhunt (Lilly Whisenhunt – DHS), Jennifer White (Self – ODOT)

### \$500 Scholarship recipients / qualifying member:

Jerry Boice (Linda Boice – Employment), Chelsey Carlson (Rebecca Cutsforth – Employment), Scott Crook (Douglas Crook – DCBS), Colin Jabin (Darrell Jabin – PERS), Tyra Jansson (Kyle Jansson – Parks), Elizabeth Kean (Robert Kean – MCEA), Alyssa Koida (Kristin Engelbretson – PSU), Gabriela Morey-Castro

(Alcides Morev-Guerra – UofO), Amanda Norman (Theresa Norman – DHS), Conor O’Connell (Brian O’Connell – PSU), Andrew Pearson (Burnie Pearson – MCEA), Hannah Peter (Susan Peter – UofO), Jeanette Pruitt (Craig Pruitt – DOE), Jessica Pruitt (Craig Pruitt – DOE), Craig Pruitt II (Craig Pruitt – DOE), Jenny Seward (John Seward – Forestry), Patrick Stauffer (David Stauffer – DCBS), Erica Thompson (Lynn Thompson – OSU), Gideon Warren (Jean Phillips – Parks), Elizabeth Woods (Thomas Wood – SOU)

**Jessie Bostelle Memorial Scholarship** – This \$750 scholarship was awarded to Melissa Anderson, a library clerk at the University of Oregon in Eugene. Melissa is enrolled in the Library Sciences program at UofO.

**Tony Lowery Memorial Scholarship** – This \$750 scholarship was awarded to Chuck Wynns from Salem who is enrolled at Western Oregon University in the Special Education program.

“With the rising costs of college tuition, it’s hard to know where to turn for financial help. I’m glad that my union saw this need and has a scholarship benefit. Both of my children and I really appreciate SEIU’s help.”

Linda Boice is an Employment Specialist in Brookings and the mother of two scholarship winners – Amanda and Jerry Boice.

Sept. 3

ANNUAL LABOR DAY PICNIC  
OAKS PARK, PORTLAND

(in Sellwood at the east end of Sellwood Bridge)

FOOD AND FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

BBQ hosted by SEIU and Portland-based Labor Unions

Look for SEIU’s purple banner and balloons. You must sign in to receive script for food. Served between 11 am – 3 pm.

Regular food vendors will not be available on Labor Day. Ride wristbands available from Oaks Park at discounted prices.

WANTED: Volunteers to work 1-hour shifts between the hours of 9AM – 4PM. Please contact Phyllis Wills @ 503-846-9459 to sign up.

## Five ways you can make a difference by Joe DiNicola, President SEIU Local 503, OPEU

Wherever we work, at the Legislature and in communities all over Oregon SEIU Local 503, OPEU members provide quality services and speak up to make life better for all Oregonians. In this issue of *The 503 Voice*, you can read about member victories at the legislature and victories organizing thousands of new members. You can learn what members in every corner of our state are doing to stand up together to win better contracts.

SEIU Local 503, OPEU members’ victories don’t happen by accident and they don’t happen by magic. When members join together we make things happen. **Here are five things you and every member can do to get in the game and make a difference:**

### 1 Show up for union meetings.

That’s where you can let your elected officers and stewards know what matters to you on the job and in contract negotiations. You can find out what other members think and brainstorm new ideas to fight back when management isn’t fair. You can help take information back to share with your co-workers. You can ask a co-worker to sign up to become a member. You can also help hand out flyers, gather signatures on petitions or just sign a petition. It helps everyone win better contracts.

### 2 Stand out where you work.

Wear purple on bargaining days and for any meeting. Wear a sticker or a button every day and hang a flyer in your cubicle. Hang a purple t-shirt over your chair. Use a union

message as a screen saver on your computer. Be visible and be vocal. It’s easy and you send a powerful message that we’re all in this together for dignity and respect.

### 3 Speak up and meet someone.

Greet new members on the job and tell them how our union is working to win power for all workers. When new workers join the bargaining unit, you can tell them about our union and about our contract rights. Let them know our wages and benefits didn’t fall out of the sky or come from the generosity of management. Tell them how SEIU Local 503, OPEU members have fought and won better wages, quality health benefits and dignity and respect for every worker. Let them know about the sacrifices and struggles of workers and union members who came before us. Who battled for and won the 40-hour week, the 8-hour day, sick leave, family leave and the absolute right to complain about bad work-places and bad bosses? Union members just like you.

### 4 Sign up to be a two-cent CAPE contributor.

Never let anyone tell you that politics don’t matter. The men and women we elect to local government, the Oregon House and Senate, the Governor’s office and Washington, D.C. make decisions every day that affect our lives and the lives of our families. When you sign up as a CAPE contributor, you can help to elect leaders who know how to stand up for working people. The best part about CAPE is that it doesn’t cost you

a dime. Your two-cent CAPE contribution (up to \$50 per year) qualifies for a dollar-for-dollar tax credit on your Oregon income tax return. If you are married, you can contribute up to \$100 per year and claim every dollar as a tax credit. Contact any local officer or steward and find out how you can sign up for CAPE. You can make a really important contribution.

### 5 Make the call to your representatives.

Every politician makes promises during an election campaign. After the election, it’s up to every SEIU Local 503, OPEU member to work to hold elected officials accountable. Whether it’s a vote on budgets for state agencies, funding for services for our clients or legislation to protect or expand workers’ rights, members are always on the front line. When you contact your representatives by phone, by mail and in person at the Capitol and in your community, you can let elected leaders know exactly what matters to working families. Ask your steward or organizer how you can step up and do your part. Every call you make makes a difference.

These are just a few things you and every member can do to build unity and power. When we act alone, it’s hard to make progress. When 40,000 SEIU Local 503, OPEU members act together, we can move mountains.



Joe DiNicola  
President