Looming Teachers’ Strike

Strike over class sizes, pay and lack of resources

(AP) - Teachers in Portland, Oregon, have voted to go on strike, their union announced Friday, in another sign of a growing national organized labor movement that’s seen thousands of workers in various sectors walk off the job this year.

The Portland Association of Teachers’ strike would start Nov. 1 unless an agreement with the school district is reached before then. The union said nearly 99% of teachers voted in favor of the strike, with 93% of its members participating in the ballot.

Teachers have cited large class sizes, salaries that have not kept up with inflation and a lack of resources as key concerns. The union has been bargaining for months with the district for a new contract, which expired in June. “Students need stability and experienced educators in our schools, but the high cost of living is pushing teachers to leave the district. I don’t know how I’m going to survive on a teacher salary in Portland and I’m at the top of the pay scale,” said Shannon Kittrick, a high school educator, in an emailed statement from the union.

Schools will close and there will be no classroom or online instruction if the strike takes place, according to the district, which said it wants to avoid such a scenario. “We want to reach a fair, sustainable settlement, and we will stay at the bargaining table as long as it takes to get there. We ask our educators to stay at the table with us, not close schools,” Portland Public Schools said in an emailed statement.

The district is the largest in Oregon with roughly 45,000 students. Public education has been gripped by a series of high-profile strikes this year. In the Los Angeles Unified School District, the nation’s second-largest, workers including teachers’ aides, cafeteria workers and custodians walked out for three days in March to demand better wages and increased staffing, shutting down education for half a million students. In Oakland, California, the union representing teachers, counselors, librarians and other workers went on strike for more than a week in May. In addition to typical demands such as higher salaries, it also pushed for “common good” changes, such as reparations for Black students and resources for students who are homeless.

New PCC Athletics Director Appointed

The Hall of Famer, Tony Broadous, has strong background in athletics

Tony Broadous has been named the athletics director for Portland Community College. With a strong background in athletics and an impressive track record, Broadous brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to this crucial role.

A long-time resident of Portland, he served as PCC’s head men's basketball coach for 11 years, during which he garnered numerous accolades, including coach of the year awards, conference and league championships, and...
Opportunity Center at 42nd Avenue Opens

Education and Career Opportunities for Underserved Communities

Portland Community College marked a significant milestone in its commitment to advancing education and career opportunities for underserved communities with the grand opening of the Opportunity Center at 42nd Avenue.

This transformative facility, located at 4299 NE Killingsworth St., is a collaborative endeavor supported by the Oregon Department of Human Services and the Native American Youth and Family Center, offering a comprehensive array of services, educational resources, and workforce development initiatives. PCC worked with Living Cully, a partnership of nonprofit groups committed to supporting the community by building economic, social, and environmental opportunities, to conduct outreach to the neighborhood to plan for the resources the community needed.

“The use of CLT in the building of the center is helping PCC meet the sustainability goals of our bond-funded project,” said Tiffani Penson, PCC board member. “The center aims to provide a warm and welcoming environment where our students and community members can access many services like workforce training, healthcare, childcare, and SNAP benefits -- all in one place. I love that. Centralized services make it so easy for our students and members of our community.”

This center's primary mission is to address racial and economic disparities by providing individuals with access to education and career-track employment opportunities. The services offered include career exploration, coaching, skills development, and comprehensive support systems to help individuals achieve their goals.

PCC's Opportunity Centers, such as the new 42nd Avenue facility, play a pivotal role in reducing opportunity gaps by equipping individuals with the skills and confidence necessary to pursue high-demand careers. These centers assist students in navigating resources, finding employment, and progressing in their academic and career pathways.

“It is spectacular,” said Rebecca Ocken, Planning & Capital Construction director. “I want to acknowledge the contributions that the center's staff made to the design of this building. The dedication and commitment that you gave to the process is transformative. This building is the way it is because of all of you.”

The grand opening is just the beginning for this vital community resource. In the coming year, public art installations reflecting the values of the center and college, as well as the diverse stories of the community, will be added. Additionally, Multnomah County is set to open a 10,000-square-foot health clinic, offering healthcare and dental services. Home Forward will begin construction on an 84-unit affordable housing complex in partnership with PCC, including NAYA’s Early Learning Center for child development services.

“With our new health clinic, we will be able to serve more than twice the number of people we serve at the current location,” said Susheela Jayapal, Multnomah County commissioner. “We'll go from 2,000 to 5,000 people. But the Opportunity Center is not just about this clinic, it's also about housing, education, wrap-around services and childcare -- all of which demonstrates PCC's commitment to workforce development.”

For more information on the center’s services, visit https://www.pcc.edu/locations/42nd-ave/
Local News

Suspect still at Large!

Woman Assaulted In SE Dies of Stab Wounds

The woman who was assaulted in the South Tabor Neighborhood died from her injuries at the hospital, and the suspect who stabbed her is being sought. Officers responded just after 11 p.m. to a report of an assault in the 6800 block of Southeast Powell Boulevard. Police say officers arrived at the scene and found the victim with serious injuries. The victim is identified as Tiara Atencio, 22, of Portland. The medical examiner determined the cause of Tiara’s death was stab wounds and the manner of death was homicide. No arrests have been made and no suspect information is being released at this stage in the investigation.

This remains an active investigation by the Portland Police Homicide Unit. If anyone has information about this case, please contact Detective Scott Broughton or Detective Eric McDaniel at 503-823-3774 or 503-823-0833, and reference case number 23-274506.

Free Trees for all Portlanders!

Forestry Team is Hosting the 7th Annual Yard Tree Giveaway

It’s time for Portlanders to get FREE TREES for their property in the annual Yard Tree Giveaway! Portland Parks & Recreation’s Urban Forestry department is giving away 2,000 trees through the program this autumn. Register now to receive up to two free trees for your private property! Advance registration is required. You can register at portland.gov/free-yard-trees or call 503-823-4963. Para registrarse en español, llame al 503-207-3505. (To register in Spanish, call 503-207-3505).

While anyone living in Portland is eligible, PP&R’s Urban Forestry staff are specifically working to get more trees planted in the hottest areas of our city. Most of these “heat islands” are located east of the Willamette River. The Yard Tree Giveaway focuses events in and near neighborhoods with the highest temperatures and the fewest trees. Remaining species include Douglas fir and Willamette Valley ponderosa pine.

You can pick up your trees, mulch, and a watering bucket at Saturday, November 4, 2023 between 8:30 am – 1:00 pm at Southeast Portland – PP&R Mt Tabor Nursery. Free delivery is available to homes in the Bridgeton, Cully, East Columbia, Humboldt, Piedmont, Powellhurst-Gilbert and Woodlawn neighborhoods. We also offer limited tree planting by our staff for people who need an accommodation.
NEW PCC ATHLETICS DIRECTOR APPOINTED

As head coach of men’s basketball, Broadous took a team that had won once in two years (2010-2012) out of a total of 47 games to become Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges champions in 2014. He guided the team to a 23-9 record and a share of the South Division title with a 10-4 league mark, earning co-coach of the year accolades as a result.

"I am absolutely delighted for this opportunity," Broadous said. "As a native Portlander, I take tremendous pride in being able to represent not only this incredible college, but the city as well. With my extensive experience in sports, coaching, administration, and guiding people of all ages, I believe this is a perfect fit."

Continued from Front

The spark for the turnaround began almost two years prior when Broadous was announced as the new head coach of the men’s basketball team in 2012. It was a homecoming for the coach. A Jefferson High School graduate, Broadous grew up playing pickup games at the Cascade Campus’ old gymnasium. He served as the head coach of nearby Grant High School for 10 years before coming to PCC, earning the Portland Interscholastic League Coach of the Year award twice and leading the team to the Oregon 6A championship in 2008.

Broadous is an alumnus of Jefferson High School, Lane Community College and Oregon State University. Upon joining PCC, he embarked on a transformative journey of not only the men’s team but improving academic excellence and athletic performance, as well as adding men’s and women’s soccer as new intercollegiate sports options.

"Tony is dedicated to both academic and athletic success," said Josh Peters McBride, executive dean of college operations. "His commitment, knowledge, and passion for student learning and sport is evident. I’m thrilled to continue working with Tony and advancing the learning and leadership of our student athletes. The future has never been brighter for Panther athletics."

In his new role as director of athletics, Broadous has ambitious plans for the department. His vision includes expanding the array of intercollegiate sports, enhancing facilities, and increasing student tuition waiver amounts to align with competing schools.

Broadous joining PCC came largely as a result of a recommendation by the late Harold Williams, a PCC Board member at the time representing North Portland. At his press conference in 2012, Williams said, “This is a great step forward for PCC athletics. I’ve known Tony for a long time — he’s from this neighborhood and he’s a great fit for PCC basketball.”

PILOT ACCUSED OF ATTEMPTED PLANE ENGINE SHUTDOWN

The plane was diverted to Portland

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Paying Tribute to the Dedication of Heroes

National recognition for well deserved Local EMS Professional

The American Ambulance Association (AAA) will be celebrating the best and brightest of EMS professionals during its annual Stars of Life celebration on November 6-8, 2023. At this year’s event, EMS professionals from across the United States will be honored as the 2023 Stars of Life including a local Metro West Ambulance-Baker City employee. Receiving this national honor and recognition will be Kristina Ploeger, Operations Manager of Metro West Ambulance-Baker City (which serves the Baker/Huntington EMS service area).

The Stars of Life program pays tribute to the dedication of these heroes while shining light on the critical role EMS plays in our healthcare infrastructure. To serve as a light for others during their worst moments truly is Kristina Ploeger’s passion and what she has dedicated her life to. Her drive stems from her humble upbringing which instilled in her values that paved the way for the person she is today. Kristina realized at a young age what was truly important to her: family, health, and happiness. In that spirit, Kristina launched her healthcare career in 2002 caring for dementia patients. A few years later, she started volunteering as a Firefighter with Columbia River Fire in St Helen’s, Oregon. It was there that Kristina quickly realized she had found more than a career—she found her life’s calling. Kristina graduated with her college degree and her Paramedic license, and spent 17 years working for Metro West Ambulance in Hillsboro, Oregon. Last year, in search of a change of scenery, Kristina and her family moved to Idaho where she became a licensed real estate agent. A few months later, when she learned that Metro West had become the ambulance provider in Baker County, Oregon, she couldn’t deny her calling nor pass up the opportunity to serve again as a Paramedic with Metro West. Today Kristina serves as the Operations Manager and as a Paramedic at Metro West Ambulance-Baker City serving the Baker/Huntington EMS service area.

Kristina and her husband Paul, who is also an EMT for the ambulance service, keep busy with their family—together they have 5 children as well as a daughter-in-law and a son-in-law with many of them serving in EMS/Fire and in the healthcare industry. In her spare time, Kristina serves as a part-time Firefighter/Paramedic for Parma Fire in Idaho and both Kristina and Paul serve with the Coast Guard Auxiliary as Vessel Examiners.

During Kristina’s time in Washington, our Star of Life recipient, accompanied by executive hosts, will meet with her members of Congress and congressional aides to discuss legislative issues critical to emergency medical services.
Intel's Oregon Investments Fuel US Silicon Innovation Leadership

Commitment to strengthen the region’s economic growth

Intel today shared its plans to advance its semiconductor technology development facilities at the Gordon Moore Park at Ronler Acres in Hillsboro, Oregon. The campus is Intel’s innovation hub for leading-edge semiconductor research, technology development and manufacturing in the United States. This undertaking is possible with support from the state of Oregon, city of Hillsboro and Washington County, and in anticipation of support from the U.S. CHIPS and Science Act.

The investments in Intel’s Oregon R&D and manufacturing operations are pivotal to the company’s technology leadership goals. They are part of Intel’s plans to invest more than $100 billion in the U.S. over a five-year period, CEO Pat Gelsinger said at September’s Intel Innovation event.

Plans include ongoing advancement of the company’s existing technology development facilities at the Gordon Moore Park campus. This substantial upgrade will usher in the latest in process technology and tools, putting the campus at the forefront of innovation. The world’s first high-numerical aperture extreme ultraviolet (high-NA EUV) lithography tool is planned to dock this year. Initiation of the application process for permits to enable a potential future multibillion-dollar expansion to Intel’s R&D and manufacturing capacity.

These investments, comparable to investments being made in other U.S. Intel sites and contingent on support from the U.S. CHIPS Act, would support several thousand new permanent and construction jobs and help ensure that Oregon and the Pacific Northwest remains the hub of U.S. semiconductor R&D and technology development for years to come.

Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek joined Intel executives today in Hillsboro in celebration of Intel’s major commitment and in support of the company’s unified vision for driving future innovation, technology development and manufacturing capabilities in the state.

"Intel's significant investments in Oregon reflect a shared vision of success and innovation," Kotek said. "As the governor of this great state, I am excited about the positive impact that Intel's expansions and partnerships will have on Oregon’s technology landscape and the future of our workforce. This collaboration highlights our state's commitment to fostering economic prosperity and diversity through education and innovation.”
Portland Spirit Cinnamon Breakfast Cruises Set Sail!

America’s Got Talent Magician Joins Cruise

Portland Spirit Cruises & Events, Oregon’s leading river cruise operator, has announced that Scott Anderson will join the cast of Cinnamon Bear as Jack Frost to perform his acclaimed magic during the Cinnamon Bear Breakfast Cruises on the Portland Spirit. Scott Anderson, an Oregon-based illusionist, honed his magic during his military service where he dedicated his free time to entertaining fellow soldiers and local Iraqi and Afghani families. In 2010, he competed on Season 5 of “America’s Got Talent” where he received a unanimous vote from the celebrity judges to advance to the next stage in Las Vegas. Anderson’s magical prowess was in the spotlight again when he performed alongside renowned magicians Penn & Teller on “Wizard Wars” and shared the stage with the legendary Snoop Dogg on the TBS hit show “Go-Big Show.” Anderson will return to the “America’s Got Talent” stage in 2024 for Season 19.

Portland Spirit has also partnered with the local bakery Simply Sweets to craft and wrap custom cinnamon bear cookies for each child on the cruise, a tradition dating back to the 1940s. “We are thrilled to collaborate with Scott Anderson for this year’s Cinnamon Bear cruises,” said Dennis Corwin, General Manager at the Portland Spirit. “Scott will bring a new spark to our Cinnamon Bear Breakfast Cruises,” Corwin continued. “Families who have made this an annual tradition will be treated to a new show, and for those who have yet to experience the magic with their children, this is the year to join us.”

The Cinnamon Bear Breakfast cruises are scheduled on 13 select dates in November and December. Boarding begins at 9:00 am and cruises the Willamette River from 9:30 am - 11:30 am, boarding from the Salmon Springs Dock at 1010 SW Naito Pkwy, Portland, OR 97204. Tickets start at $66 for adults or $49 for children 12 and younger. Reservations are available at portlandspirit.com/cinnamonbear or by calling 503-224-3900.

A Combination of Scripture, Poetry, and Dance!

Black Nativity

Based on the traditional Nativity story

Black Nativity is directed by Jerry Foster. Black Nativity tells the story of the Nativity from an African American perspective through a combination of scripture, poetry, dance, and song with griot-style narration.

Previews are 7:30pm Wednesday, Nov. 22, 7:30pm Thursday, Nov. 23

Opening night - 7:30pm Friday, Nov. 24 The run of the show – is 7:30pm Thursdays, Fridays, 3:00pm matinees Saturdays and Sundays through Dec. 10. The show takes place at the Brunish Theatre, 4th floor, 1111 SW Broadway, Portland, OR 97205.

PassinArt, Oregon’s longest producing Black theatre company begins its 41st year and the new 2023-24 season - Change Gonna Come! Our mission is to entertain, educate, and celebrate our culture while highlighting critical issues that impact the community. Tickets can be purchased at www.passinart.org.
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Benefit Concert for Moroccan Earthquake Relief

Northwest Portland’s Alberta Rose Theatre presents a special evening blending Moroccan and Flamenco music by locally-based and internationally-lauded Sef-farine to support the ongoing re-covery for victims of the September 9th earthquake near Marrakech, Morocco. All proceeds from the Sunday, November 5th, 7:00 pm performance will go to Marrake-ch-based Amal Women’s Training Center, which is providing essen-tial aid to affected communities.

While Seffarine founders Lami-ae Naki and Nat Hulskamp were recording in Naki’s home country of Morocco last month, it became clear to them — “Seeing the dev-astation first hand, we decided that this concert, which had been on our calendar for some time, had to support what’s going to be a long recovery for the affected commu-nities in southern Morocco,” said Hulskamp. The concert is also sig-nificant because the group’s found-ing cajónist and flamenco dancer, Manuel Gutierrez, will be return-ing to Portland from his new home in Spain for this performance.

Funds raised will go directly to relief efforts of the recent earth-quake in Morocco.

Amal is a non-profit organi-zation that supports courageous women on their journey towards empowerment and financial inde-pendence. Located approximately 50km from the epicenter of the Sep-9th earthquake, Amal’s staff quickly responded by making and distribut-ing 13,500 meals, 50 tents, 24 solar lights, and $6,000 worth of food sta-ples in just the first 6 days following the quake. Some of the Amal staff were sleeping outdoors themselves because their homes weren’t safe, yet they showed up each day ready to cook thousands of meals for peo-ple who were even worse off. There is still much to be done in the recov-ery efforts and Amal is committed to long-term relief.

Seffarine has performed at presti-gious events and venues around the world, like the Chicago World Music Festival and the Lotus Fes-tival, winning over audiences from Indonesia to Spain. They have brought their musical vision and cultural knowledge to commu-nity audiences and schools, includ-ing a recent tour of rural Montana schools on the Fort Peck Reserva-tion. The ensemble has a strong history of support from the field: in 2017, Seffarine was selected by the Western Arts Alliance as one of three Launchpad Artists. Their debut album, “De Fez a Jerez” was supported by a grant from the Re-gional Arts and Culture Council, allowing the group to work and record in Spain with living legends of flamenco music. The album re-ceived international acclaim and placed in the Transglobal World Music Charts top 20 world music releases, selected by a panel of 43 world music experts, and was named one of the “best African al-bums of 2015” by prestigious Afri-can music blog Afribuku.
Flu Vaccination Rates Remain Low!

OHA data show rates slow to recover after big drop during pandemic

Influenza vaccination rates among Oregon’s health care personnel have not recovered from significant declines suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic, new Oregon Health Authority (OHA) data show. According to the Healthcare Worker Influenza Vaccination Dashboard published by OHA’s Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) Program, 64% of the state’s eligible health care workers from all facility types were vaccinated against the flu during the 2022-2023 flu season. This is similar to the 2021-2022 flu season rate of 63% -- a concern for state officials trying to prevent the virus’s spread to people most at risk of severe illness and death.

The influenza vaccination rate among eligible health care workers had dropped by 25% between the 2019-2020 and 2022-2023 influenza seasons. “Health care workers are the first line of defense in protecting vulnerable patients and preventing a severe respiratory virus season from becoming a catastrophic one,” said Rebecca Pierce, Ph.D., HAI Program manager. “That’s why influenza vaccination of health care workers is a key strategy for infection control in health care facilities.”

OHA requires annual reporting of health care worker influenza vaccination data from four facility types – ambulatory surgery centers, dialysis centers, hospitals (including inpatient psychiatric facilities) and nursing facilities. “Influenza vaccinations among health care workers were significantly impacted during the pandemic, which is likely reflective of historically low rates of influenza during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 flu seasons,” Pierce said. “However, flu transmission has returned to pre-pandemic levels. It’s important that we focus on rebuilding flu vaccination rates for this critical, front-line workforce.”

The proportion of eligible health care workers who declined flu vaccination has increased over the years. For the 2022-2023 flu season, 15% declined, compared to 11% for the 2021-2022 season. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services developed Healthy People 2020 with 10-year objectives for improving the health of all Americans, including showing progress toward a 90% influenza vaccination goal for the health care workforce. However, because Healthy People 2030 does not include a goal focused on increasing flu vaccinations among health care workers, Oregon continues to use the Healthy People 2020 goal as a way of directing public health action and showing where more support and education is needed.

To achieve 90% influenza vaccination coverage, Pierce said there are important steps health care facilities can take. Among public health recommendations is encouraging health care workers, including those not employed by the facility—contractors and volunteers—to get vaccinated at the beginning of every influenza season.
CEDAR RISING – BRAND NEW – NOW LEASING!
Cedar Rising located in the Aloha community of unincorporated Washington County offers 82 affordable apartments. Now taking pre-applications for 48 units affordable to households earning up to 60% of the area median income (AMI). Monthly rents are 2BRs $1,482 and 3BRs $1,711.
Pre-applications for the 60% AMI units will be available online and at our temporary leasing office starting on November 7, 2023. Starting Nov 7, visit cedar-rising.com to download a pre-app, or visit our temp leasing office at 280 SE 12th Ave, Hillsboro, OR 97123 from M–F 9AM–5PM. Our leasing phone number is 971.384.2051. Disabled applicants are encouraged to apply. We do not discriminate on the basis of disability. Income and other restrictions apply. Rents subject to change. EHO. BRIDGE Property Management Company.

Black Male Achievement Analyst I
What you’ll get to do
Convene and Facilitate:
• Organize and facilitate gatherings, meetings, and community events with members of Portland’s Black community, Black Male Achievement Steering Committee, and other stakeholders to support the program’s vision, mission, strategic plan, and evaluation.
Groups include:
• Regional government officials
• Black community-based organization leaders
• Black youth
• Funding entities
Guide Policy:
• Be the program’s visionary driver by researching, analyzing, and incorporating promising and best equity practices to support BMA’s strategic plan and policy advocacy strategy.
Program Design and Implementation including, but not limited to:
• Summer Youth Experience &dash; a program to increase career pathways for Black men and boys.
• Black Men and Boys Healing Summit &dash; a gathering that supplements the Family Stability Committee’s goal of redressing trauma specific to Black men and boys.
For more information, please visit https://apptrkr.com/4734693.

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Demystifying Medicare Advantage Plans Part 1

4 Key Points for Informed Decision-Making

Medicare Advantage plans, also known as Medicare Part C, are complicated and a popular choice for seniors and individuals with disabilities seeking comprehensive healthcare coverage. While these plans offer a wide range of benefits, there are crucial details that Medicare-eligible individuals should understand to make informed healthcare decisions. Here are four key points to consider when choosing a Medicare Advantage plan.

1. Understand the Basics: Medicare Advantage plans are offered by private insurance companies that are contracted with the government. These plans are required to provide the same level of coverage as Original Medicare (Medicare Part A and Part B). Most Medicare Advantage plans also include extra benefits such as prescription drug coverage, dental, vision, hearing care, and alternative therapies like natural path chiropractic and acupuncture. It’s essential to carefully review the plans available in your area to find one that matches your specific healthcare needs. However, comparing plans can be complicated, so seeking professional assistance is recommended.

2. Network Limitations: Most Medicare Advantage plans, particularly those following the Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) model, have a network of doctors and hospitals. This differs from Original Medicare, which allows you to see any healthcare provider that accepts Medicare. Some plans, known as Preferred Provider Organizations (PPOs), offer out-of-network coverage but may come with higher costs. Check whether your healthcare providers are part of the plan’s network and consider how this could impact your access to care. Note that HMO plans often require referrals to see specialists, while PPOs may allow self-referrals.

3. Cost Considerations: Medicare Advantage plans can have lower or even zero premiums compared to Original Medicare, which only pays for 80 percent of most hospital and doctor visits. Making Medicare Advantage plans attractive to cost-conscious individuals like you. However, it’s crucial to consider the total cost of care, including premiums, deductibles, copayments, coinsurance, and out-of-pocket maximums. Comparing these expenses can be challenging, so it’s advisable to seek assistance to determine which plan is the most cost-effective for your specific needs.

4. Annual Changes and Flexibility: Medicare Advantage plans have the option to change their coverage, costs, and network providers each year. While most plans aim to remain stable from year to year, it’s important to review your plan’s Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) to stay informed about any changes that might affect your coverage or expenses. Consider what you like and dislike about your current plan. If you find too many disadvantages, remember that you have the option to switch to another Medicare Advantage plan or return to Original Medicare during the Annual Enrollment Period (AEP), which is NOW from October 15th through December 7th.

Making an informed decision about your Medicare Advantage plan is crucial for your healthcare and financial well-being. Seek assistance from professionals who can guide you through the complexities and help you find the plan that best suits your unique needs.
Another Strike Possible

As Strike Ends Workers Continue to Bargain!

1,300 PeaceHealth workers who went on strike on Monday, October 23rd, returned to work. These workers had organized a five-day Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) strike to protest actions by management that the union says were illegal and violated the union rights of their workers. These healthcare workers, who are members of the Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals (OFNHP, AFT Local 5017), have been negotiating their next union contract for months and say that management pushed them onto the picket line through bad faith bargaining and by making unilateral changes to their contracts.

“This strike was a direct result of management violating the labor rights of its workers, refusing to negotiate in productive ways, and making unilateral changes that undermined the legally protected status of our members,” says Jonathan Baker, OFNHP President. These workers make up three of the four bargaining units currently negotiating with PeaceHealth for a new contract, including the Lab Professionals at PeaceHealth St. John and the Tech and Service and Maintenance units at PeaceHealth Southwest. In Eugene, the Tech unit has been negotiating with PeaceHealth Sacred Heart, focusing on the same issues that the PeaceHealth workers up north have been negotiating over, such as short staffing and living wages.

All of the units say that management has been refusing to address concerns over low wages, which they say is making it difficult to attract and retain qualified staff and, ultimately, limiting patient access. If the Techs at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart do not see acceptable movement regarding staffing and wage proposals from management over the next couple of weeks, they could set up a strike authorization vote and, ultimately, walk out on strike themselves.

The units returned to the bargaining table this week, with PeaceHealth St. John at the table yesterday and other PeaceHealth Southwest units negotiating today and the 7th. Each one of those units reserve the right to strike again if adequate progress is not made at the bargaining table. Instead of trying to avoid last week’s strike, management chose to cancel all bargaining dates, offer strike breaking workers upwards of $8,000 a week, and threatened to cancel the health insurance of the striking workers. Despite holding a press conference on the 23rd stating that the hospital would run at “100%” during the strike, PeaceHealth was only able to secure fewer than 200 replacement workers to cover the 1,300 employees walking the picket line.

Two People Rescued from Different Elevator Cars

PF&R Responds to Downtown Portland Building

Portland Fire & Rescue successfully rescued two individuals from different inoperable elevator cars this week in the Wells Fargo Center building in Downtown Portland. PF&R responded to reports of individual stuck in an elevator with a single truck company. As they were working with building personnel to aid in gaining access to assess the situation the elevator service company arrived, and the scene was transferred to the elevator technicians. After an hour of working through all possible options to get the elevator car to operate and discovering that there was another elevator with an occupied car also stuck, a call was again made to the emergency dispatch center and a high angle rope team was initiated. This called in 16 rope technicians from Portland Fire along with the initial responding truck company totaling 20 firefighters on scene. A rope system was set in place with a rescuer lowered to each inoperable elevator car and each occupant was safely removed and returned to the lobby.

In buildings as tall as the Wells Fargo Center, there are multiple elevator shafts where cars only serve a certain section of the building. The only doors that access these elevators are in the lobby along with floor 21 and above. This forced the technical rescue team to establish their entry point into the elevator shafts on the 21st floor. The occupant of the first car was estimated to be on or around the 3rd floor level. The tech team set up to lower a rescuer using specialized equipment and ropes to the elevator car. The overhead hatch was opened with the assistance of the elevator technician on site. (The freight elevator was located just next to the shaft of this inoperable car allowing the technician to manually operate the car and stop where needed to provide tools and assistance to the rescuer on the elevator car in the next shaft over.) The uninjured occupant was connected to the rope system and removed from the inoperable car. Using safety equipment carried down by the rescuer, the nimble occupant was transferred over to the freight elevator and be taken to the lobby nearly 4½ hours after the car inexplicably stopped descending.

The team then raised the rescuer to Floor 21 and set the rope system in the adjacent elevator shaft to perform the second rescue. The rescuer was lowered to the second inoperable car which was estimated to be only 30’ to 40’ below the entry point. The rescuer contacted the second uninjured occupant, and they were raised to the floor of entry and safely brought onto the floor away from the open door to the elevator shaft. The occupant was removed from the system, escorted to the lobby, and exited the building. This individual was stuck for a similar length of time, close to 5 hours, in discussions with the elevator technicians, it is unknown why either of the elevator cars stopped and if these are random or are related to one another.

Previous PeaceHealth strike from October 23rd

Rescue Pic 1: Early establishing a high point for ease of entry and removal of personnel through the elevator door. (Photo Courtesy of Portland Fire & Rescue)