# **Eastern Washington** Machinists News Volume 3, No. 1 - Dec 2010/Jan 2011



# **Guide Dog Delivers Freedom to Member**

District 751 Machinist Union member Dennis Meech and his guide dog, Lefty, are learning their way around Meech's hometown of Goldendale, according to a Thanksgiving Day feature story in the Yakima Herald-Republic.

The season's first snow caught the California-raised Labrador off guard, and the 2-year-old "still has a lot of pup in him," Meech told a reporter for the paper.

But Lefty is making it possible for Meech to go on daily walks through town to have coffee and visit with friends at the American Legion, crossing streets and avoiding light poles, the paper reported.

"He's got a few things to learn with Dennis," said Vern Wade, one of Meech's long-time friends. "He does pretty good, though."

The Herald-Republic profiled Meech and Lefty after they came back to Goldendale from a month-long training session at the Guide Dogs of America school in Syl-



Dennis Meech enjoys a lot more freedom and independence since he brought home Lefty, his quide dog.

Left: Dennis and Lefty taking a walk in the snow outside his home over the holidays.

mar, Calif.

Guide Dogs of America was founded by a Machinists Union member in 1948, after he was told he was too old to benefit from a dog. The union continues to be the main supporter of the charity, and District 751 is the top fundraiser nationwide, rais-Continued page 3

## **Members at Pexco Ratify New Four-Year Agreement**

District 751 members working for aerospace supplier Pexco have approved a new four-year contract.

Some 74 percent of members voted in favor of the contract. The deal covers 130

workers at the plant, which provides plastic components for aircraft interiors as well as parts for the auto industry.

"What we got was a step in the right direction," said Dave Bailey, a Union Stew-

ard at the Pexco plant. "To get a contract in this economy that has added benefits and pluses is a great thing.

He added that for the workers "to walk out with a contract that has no take-aways and has nothing but more improvements as far as language, and as far as money – it was very positive."

Under the terms of the contract, workers will get raises of 40 cents an hour in the first three years, with a 50-cent-anhour raise in the fourth year. In addition, pay will go up 15 cents an hour for every entry-level job category, shift differentials will increase by 15 cents an hour, and lead pay will increase 15 cents an hour.

The changes, which took affect Dec. 1, mean entry-level pay now ranges from \$11.12 to \$21.65 an hour at the plant, depending on each worker's job category.

Even though it was one of the coldest days of the year, members from Pexco took the time to come out and vote on the contract proposal and ratify a new agreement by more than 74

percent.



Continued page 4

### **New Contracts Ratified at Cummins NW**

Machinists Union members working at Cummins Northwest ended the year on a high note – approving two separate new three year contracts on December 22.

These skilled diesel mechanics service all types of trucks and equipment at the company's facilities in Pendleton, Oregon and Spokane, Washington. In addition, they maintain and service power generators for hospitals, police, fire and other emergency services.

While they have separate contracts covering each location, the issues are pretty universal. Since it is the same company, Business Rep Steve Warren and Staff Assistant Ken Howard negotiated both agreements simulatenously.

"During these tough economic times, the company had a dismal economic forecast which complicated the negotiations. Delivering a pay raise each year of the contract was a win for the employees," stated Staff Assistant Ken Howard, who served on the Union negotiating committee.

"By getting a general wage increase each



L to R: Staff Assistant Ken Howard, Steward Zack Mayer, and Business Rep Steve Warren discuss the new contract for members working at Cummins Northwest in Pendleton, OR and Spokane. WA.

year and the largest was up front, they get more cumulative money over the life of the agreement," added Warren.

Employees will receive a 2 percent General Wage Increase effective January 1, 2011, and an additional 1 percent General Wage Increase effective January 1, 2012 and January 1, 2013.

All other provisions of the agreement remained the same as the previous contract.

# Save the Date "Social Security Works" Forum

### ...the many faces of Social Security

WHAT: An Intergenerational Forum

WHEN: Saturday, February 19, 2011 from 1 to 3 p.m.

WHERE: Spokane Community College, Auditorium, Spokane, WA

**WHO SHOULD ATTEND:** Students age 18-25, soon to be retirees, retirees, community organizations, small business networks, care givers of aging adults, disability groups, survivor benefit recipients, and concerned citizens.

Invited guests include: • Mary Verner, Mayor of Spokane

- Dani Pere, Director Field Mobilization Alliance for Retired Americans, Wash. DC
- Steve Kofahl, President American Fed. of Government Employees, Local 3937

FEBRUARY (19)

Beth Thew, Secretary-Treasurer, Spokane Regional Labor Council

Space is limited so reserve your spot by emailing washingtonalliance@gmail.com note that you want to attend the Spokane Social Security Forum. Have questions? Call Jo Jacobson at 253-549-3033 or Gail Spaeth at 509-487-2158

#### **Union Meeting Schedule**

All members welcome at meetings

**Local 1951** - Richland - 1st Tuesday of month at 7:30 pm, 1305 Knight St.

**Local 1123** - Wenatchee - 1st Thursday of month at 7 pm, Aluminum Trades Council, 180 Rock Island Rd, E. Wenatchee

**Local 86** - Spokane - 2nd Thursday of month at 6 pm, Spokane Hall, 4226 E. Mission Ave.

**Members at PEXCO** - Yakima - 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m., IAM Satellite office, 507 S. 3rd St (Carpenter's Hall)

Members at Tri-County and Republic Waste Services, Sunday, February 13 at 10 a.m. - Goldendale PUD Building.

#### **Eastern Washington Phone Contacts**

**SPOKANE OFFICE:** Steve Warren

Phone: 509-534-9690. Toll free: 1-800-763-1305

TRI-CITIES: Ken Howard Phone: 509-943-5670

# Guide Dog Delivers Freedom to Sight-Impaired Member

Continued from front page

ing a record \$276,000 in 2010.

While Machinists here have been raising funds for Guide Dogs for nearly two decades, Meech is believed to be the first District 751 member to get services from the organization.

Meech was a Local 1951 member working for Allied Waste at the Roosevelt Regional Landfill in Klickitat County when he was in an accident that took his eyesight. He was on his way home from work in August 2007, riding his Harley-Davidson on U.S. Highway 97, when he was caught by a gust of wind as he crested a grade.

The wind blew him sideways into a guardrail, breaking his pelvis and right leg. He lost so much blood that his body shut down his optic nerve. He woke up completely blind.

His leg injuries required extensive rehabilitation, and he spent almost a year in a wheelchair. But he and his wife, Joan, decided early on that they wanted to get a guide dog. Both are dog lovers, they told the newspaper.

"Initially, we were going to get a guide dog through a group in Oregon," Joan Meech told Machinists Union staffers this summer. "Then one of his buddies told him about how the Machinists helped establish Guide Dogs of America and are the top contributors to the charity."

Local 1951 members also helped raise more than \$1,600 for Meech's expenses, money that was matched by management at Allied Waste and Pexco in Union Gap.

With the help of his local lodge officers and District 751 staff, Meech got on the list to be paired with a dog through Guide Dogs of America, which led to his meeting Lefty in October.

"I am just totally stoked," petting Lefty as he vigorously wagged his tail and licked Meech's face.

"I'm probably more excited than he is."

Teaming with Lefty is part of the process as Meech reclaims his life. A state grant paid for a talking cash register and scanner that allows him to work at the pro shop at the Goldendale Country Club, and Meech has resumed golfing, relying on a friend to help him aim for the pin.

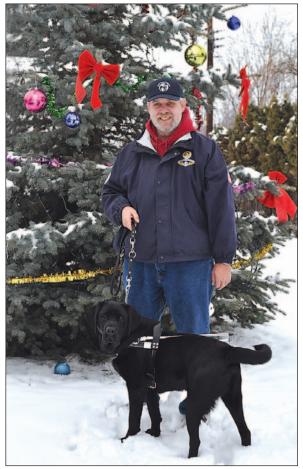
Meech has also reclaimed his seat at the weekly Texas Hold'Em game he started at a Goldendale pub, relying on Joan to tell him what cards he's got in his hand.

"Dennis has such a positive attitude and is a real inspiration," said District 751 President Tom Wroblewski. "He and his family are incredible and have adapted to the situation admirably. His perseverance is a testament to the heart and soul of our membership."

Member Dennis Meech has regained a lot of freedom since obtaining his guide dog Lefty.

"You have your moments," Meech told the newspaper. "You just don't dwell on the negative and go with the positive, I guess."

You can watch a video of Meech and Lefty working together at the Guide Dogs of America facility. It's at the District 751 YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/iambuildingcommunity.



Over the holidays, Dennis poses after taking a walk near his home

Congratulating Dennis on receiving his new guide dog (L to R): Staff Assistant Ken Howard, Dennis Meech & Lefty, steward Jerry Mickelson, and District President Tom Wroblewski.

### Members at Pexco Ratify New Four-Year Agreement

Continued from front page

The workers also gained some job security language in the contract, in that Pexco agreed not to do any subcontracting that results in layoffs of regular workers or prevents the recall of any laid-off workers. The contract also granted workers improvements related to overtime scheduling, personal days, holiday pay and recall rights if there are layoffs.

Healthcare benefit costs will remain the same.

The union's negotiating committee, led by District 751 Business Rep Steve Warren and Staff Assistant Ken Howard, had recommended that members accept the contract, telling them that it brought "improvements in several areas you identified as important and includes no takeaways."

"You could always be better," said Howard, "but all in all, they really did get a pretty good deal. There were no takeaways, and we got lots of good contract language. It was a step in the right direction and a good second contract."

This was the second union contract for the Pexco workers, who joined Local 1951 in 2007, when the company was called Filtrona. The company was renamed in 2009 by its owners, Saw Mill Capital Partners, a private equity firm.

The first contract came on the heels of a contentious union organizing campaign. This round of negotiations went much more smoothly, Bailey said.

"On the first contract we sat there for eight



Counting the ballots after the vote L to R: Wayne Griffith, "Sam" Jensen, Dave Bailey and Jack Clinton.

months, spending whole days on one section of the contract. This time, getting through all of it in five or six days was almost intimidating."

That's not to say talks were easy, however.

"We had some very tense moments at the negotiating table," said Howard. "But both sides truly came to negotiate and we came up with a good contract for the membership."

Warren agreed. "Once you get a second contract, you are on the way to building a stronger foundation for the future. We secured non-economic language that helps all

the members. It was clear through all the surveys, members wanted to keep gray out of the contract and be able to secure solid language around how to use their benefits, work rules and policies. This contract did a lot of that," he added.

Pexco has been hiring recently, adding close to 20 workers after receiving additional orders from Boeing and winning new work providing plastic seals for a nationally known maker of home furnaces.

"We've been hiring like crazy," Bailey said. "Things are going good."

### New Yakima Satellite Office for Better Service

Machinists Union members and Stewards working in the Yakima area have a new home: the Machinists 751 Office located at 507 S. 3rd St, Yakima in the Carpenter's Hall.

This is also where the monthly meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m.

The Union set up this satellite office space to better serve the members, and it gives a permanent location for monthly meetings. Now Stewards have an office to write up grievances, send faxes, and send things to the Business Rep/Staff Assistant or just meet to discuss issues going on in the workplace.

The Yakima area has members working at a handful of employers, including: Pexco, Prompt Printery, Brands Equipment and Edwards Equipment.



L to R: Staff Assistant Ken Howard, Pexco Union Steward Jack Clinton and Business Rep Steve Warren meet at the new satellite IAM union office in Yakima.

### **RETIREES**

Congratulations to the following members who retired from local lodges in Eastern Washington in the last half of 2010 (local lodge and employer are noted):

- Jim Johnson, Local 86, ASC Machine Tools
- Tommie Kopp, Local 86, Triumph Composites
- Jerry Jaggers, Local 1951, Rabanco
- Andrew Wesley, Local 1951, Rabanco
- Daniel Davidson, Local 1123, Grand Coulee Dam
- Doug Cotter, Local 86, UPS
- Kathy Cumpton, Local 86, Triumph Composites

### **Machinists Efforts Bring Cancellation of MexicoNow**

A conference in Seattle to promote the outsourcing of aerospace jobs to Mexico was canceled in December after Machinists and other trade unionists threatened widespread protests.

The news was welcomed by District 751 President Tom Wroblewski, who had led the effort against the MexicoNow conference.

**Stop Outsourcing** 

**American Jobs!** 

"Clearly, this is the exact wrong time in America to sit back and allow more jobs to be exported," he said in a statement to the media.

The MexicoNow event was touted by its organizers as an opportunity for aerospace manufacturers to learn ways to exploit

Mexico's low-cost, non-union labor. It was sponsored by MexicoNow – a magazine published by business developers – and had support from several U.S. companies, including Boeing, which was scheduled to send a senior supply chain manager to speak at the conference.

Several aerospace suppliers in Eastern Washington have already been exploring moving to Mexico. Triumph Composites has already opened a facility in Mexico. The Union did not want any additional Washington aerospace jobs sent to Mexico from any suppliers — whether the Union represents the workers or not. Washington should remain the largest aerospace cluster in the world.

Upon learning of the conference, Wroblewski fired off a letter to Boeing CEO Jim McNerney in Chicago. The union chief told McNerney that it was "incredibly inappropriate" for his company to be involved in the outsourcing conference, given that McNerney himself is chairman of President Obama's Council on Exports, which is charged with increasing overseas sales of

America-made products, not with giving away American jobs.

If Boeing didn't withdraw from the conference, Machinists and other trade unionists would mount protests outside Boeing Commercial Airplane headquarters at Longacres, Wroblewski warned.

"Clearly, the last thing you or I want

to see are Machinists marching with signs outside Longacres once again," he wrote.

> "But this issue is too big for this union to ignore," Wroblewski told McNerney. "America's economic recovery hinges upon increasing the sales of U.S.-made products overseas.

And...the talent drain caused by outsourcing is causing long-term damage to our nation's economy."

Machinists were also planning to protest at offices of other companies that were sending speakers, Wroblewski said. The goal of that was "to hold the companies taking part in the conference accountable for their actions."

"At a time," he wrote, "when 358,000 Washington state residents are unemployed, untold thousands more have given up on ever finding a job — and one in seven are on food stamps — we felt it was essential that someone ask the conference participants a very pointed question: Why are you working so hard to undermine this state's economy and send these vital aerospace jobs out of the country?"

Wroblewski said the union got strong support from Washington's Congressional delegation, including several Democrats the union had worked hard to re-elect this fall, namely, U.S. Sen. Patty Murray and Congressmen Jay Inslee, Rick Larsen and Jim McDermott.



District President Tom Wroblewski reports on union actions that resulted in the MexicoNow Seattle conference being cancelled. The conference was designed to attract aerospace firms in Washington State to move work to Mexico – something the Union strongly opposes.

The Washington State Labor Council and SPEEA also supported the Machinists, Wroblewski said. SPEEA's executive council joined the Machinists in calling on the MexicoNow organizers to cancel the event, and said it was ready to help with the protests.

But the key to stopping the conference was the willingness of hundreds of Machinists Union Stewards and members to take part in the protests, Wroblewski said during Local Lodge meetings in December. "Your solidarity has made a difference in protecting Washington state aerospace jobs."

Wroblewski said District 751 will continue to monitor the MexicoNow group, which has announced plans for another outsourcing conference in February, this time in El Paso, Texas. Seattle-based Aerospace Machinists stand ready to help their union brothers and sisters to keep the group from taking their jobs away, he said.

"We've got a line on them, and we'll keep fighting for American jobs until they give up and go back to Mexico," Wroblewski said.

Join us on Facebook! www.facebook.com/IAM751

facebook



Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/IAM751





Aerospace Machinists Dist. Lodge 751 9125 15th Place South Seattle, WA 98108-5100

Address Service Requested

PRESORTED FIRST CLASS U.S. POSTAGE PAID SEATTLE, WA PERMIT No. 584

### 2011 IAM Scholarship Competition

The IAM Scholarship Competition is open each year to members

of the IAM and their children throughout the United States and Canada. Scholarships are determined in a competition among eligible applicants that is judged by an inde-

pendent Selection Committee.

**Awards to members** are \$2,000 per academic year. They are granted for a specific period from one to four years leading to a bachelor's degree or a two-year vocational/technical certification.

Awards to Children of Members are: College: \$1,000 per academic year. All awards are renewable each year, until a bache-

Obtain an IAM
Scholarship application
and guidelines
online by visiting
www.goiam.org/
iamscholarship

lor's degree is obtained or for a maximum of four years, which-

ever occurs first. Vocational/Technical School: \$2,000 per year until certification is reached for a maximum of two years, whichever occurs first.

To be eligible for the competition, children must be planning to graduate during the winter or by end of the spring 2011 school year (i.e. normally a high school senior).

For complete 2011 Scholarship Guidelines or to obtain an application form, visit www.goiam.org/iamscholarship.

NOTE: Completed Application Packets must be postmarked no later than February 25, 2011.



IAM Member Hung Truong (I), who works at ASC Machine Tool, and his wife Tina were beaming with pride when their daughter Katie received the 2010 IAM Scholarship.

#### Request For an Application Form - 2011 Scholarship Form

| Please send me an Application Packet for the 2011 IAM Scholarship Competition. I understand that this         |
|---|
| request is not an application and that the completed Application Packet must be postmarked no later than Feb. |
| 25, 2011. REMINDER: Please check the appropriate box below and the requested application will be mailed       |
| to you. As an IAM member who will have 2 years' continuous membership in the IAM as of Feb. 25, 2011, I am    |
| requesting an Application Form for:   |

|  | Child of member | requesting a | College | Scholarship |
|--|-----------------|--------------|---------|-------------|
|--|-----------------|--------------|---------|-------------|

Child of member requesting a Vocational/Technical Scholarship

IAM member requesting a College or Vocational/Technical Scholarship

Member's Name Requesting Packet:\_

IMPORTANT: Complete this coupon AND attach a SELF-ADDRESSED LABEL for reply. (Do not send self-addressed envelope).

Mail to: IAM Scholarship Program, 9000 Machinists Place, Room 117, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-2687