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LABORERS' NORTHWEST COOPERATION FUND JOINS THE OREGON BUILDING CONGRESS' WORKFORCE EFFORTS

WILSONVILLE, OR – The Laborers' Northwest Cooperation Fund (LNWCF) has recently become a member of the Oregon Building Congress (OBC) in an effort to tackle their shared challenge of attracting quality and diverse workers to construction careers.

One of the biggest challenges the construction industry will be facing in the near future is a shortage of skilled workers. Since various industries compete for the attention of the next generation of workers, LNWCF saw an opportunity to have a greater impact by partnering with OBC.

Jay Minor, President of Coral Construction Company and Member of the LNWCF's Board of Directors advised the Fund's Board of OBC's work and the success they have had helping to produce construction craftsman to the field in Oregon. *"I was impressed with the OBC's hands-on approach utilizing practical programs that produce the solid results that construction crafts and their employers need. It certainly justified our involvement",* said Minor.

"After OBC Executive Director Dick O'Connor's presentation to the board, the directors unanimously voted to support the OBC" said John Landerfelt, Executive Director of LNWCF. *"The OBC's comprehensive package, the quality and success of OBC's programs, the connection to educators and students, the Construction Academy, Teacher Workshops, and their informative Building Futures magazine parallel many of the Cooperation Funds' goals. We owe many thanks to Jay Minor for introducing our organization to the Oregon Building Congress."*

The Northwest Laborers Cooperation Fund (LNWCF), is affiliated with the National Laborers Employers Cooperation and Education Trust (LECET). The National and Northwest LECET programs bring local laborers' unions and their signatory contractors together to address issues of importance to both. The Fund was established under the Labor-Management Cooperation Act of 1978 in order to enable Labor and Management to work together on issues of importance to the entire industry.

Things such as transportation funding, market-related legislation, marketing strategies and workforce development are a few of the areas where employer and employee cooperation has been found to have great success. A key message LNWCF wants to drive home is that being a laborer means being devoted to quality, training and safety. Joining OBC was a natural extension for LNWCF.

“We make a difference by paying attention to the needs of industry as well as the challenges faced by educators,” says Dick O’Connor, OBC’s executive director. By being integrated into committees such as the State Youth Council, Clackamas Youth Council, Business Education Compact, Connect by 25, as well as educational conferences and high schools, OBC keeps abreast of teachers’ challenges in educating students. It also provides an avenue to positively influence teachers’ opinions and attitudes about careers in construction. According to O’Connor, *“Many teachers are surprised at the amount of math that is needed for construction careers and they find our tools for teaching math engaging.”*

OBC’s mission, “to partner with educators to attract a quality and diverse applicants to the building industry,” is achieved through the four pillars of their programs – Construction Academies, Teacher Workshops, the Building Futures magazine and the Green Building Initiative. For more information, visit the OBC site at www.obcweb.com.

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