



# COPPEA CLIPS

A Newsletter for the COPPEA Chapter of Professional & Technical Employees Local 17

July 2014



## Portland Parks & Recreation Seeks Replacement Bond

By Gerry Verhoef, PTE Local 17, COPPEA Chapter President and Engineering Associate for PP&R

While new parks can be built with SDC (System Development Charges) fees, money needed to maintain existing Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) facilities continues to diminish. And as more and more maintenance is put off, the higher the costs are to continue to “Band-Aid” the facilities, forcing the maintenance to fall further behind.

Most repairs now fall into the “major maintenance” category – high dollar repair items. Items like rebuilding public pools that are beyond their life expectancy, replacing badly dilapidated roofs on facilities, replacing unsafe playground equipment, restoring nature trail bridges, replacing WWII-era mechanical systems, rebuilding unsanitary restroom facilities, and eliminating barriers to patrons with disabilities. The needed repairs and replacements are estimated to cost \$365 million over the next 10 years.

One solution to redirect the downward slide of PP&R major maintenance is to request the Portland tax payers to “continue” the 1994 Park’s Bond for an additional 20 years, currently due to expire in 2015. This debt service bond is approximately \$0.0877 per \$1,000 of assessed value, an annual equivalent of \$13 for an averaged assessed value of \$150,000. It is estimated that this bond continuation – referred to as a “replacement bond” – would generate approximately \$56 - \$68 million without changing the tax rate.

The use of the generated money from the replacement bond would focus on:

- Playgrounds – replace or build 10 to 20 play structures closed or at risk of closing
- Bridges and Trails – preserve access to natural areas and open spaces by repairing bridges and trails
- Pools – prevent emergency closures, stop water



Verhoef inspects the Sellwood Pool in NE Portland.

leaks, improve water conservation and energy efficiency

- Protect Workers – improve safety of work environments; make critical upgrades, fix leaking roofs, update equipment at maintenance facilities
- Pioneer Courthouse Square – the most visited city park has structures failing and leaking
- Accessibility – remove access barriers at facilities
- Restrooms/urgent repairs – prevent closures, replace and repair restrooms and other failing structures

PP&R Commissioner Amanda Fritz will take the public-supported (65% of those surveyed) replacement bond recommendation to the City Council on July 24th for a vote to refer it to the November ballot. More information on the bond can be found at [ParksReplacementBond.org](http://ParksReplacementBond.org).

*Note: Verhoef will testify at the July 24 meeting. She will speak about the need for the bond based on her experience working in PP&R, as a member of the BAC, and as COPPEA Chapter President.*

### COPPEA Clips

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# Professional Development Fund Increased for 2014/2015

As of July 1, the Professional Development Fund (PDF) amount is increased to \$150,000 for the 2014/2015 fiscal year. This is up from \$125,000 for 2013/2014. (See Article 23 of the COPPEA contract).

The PDF can be used to pay for tuition, books, professional licensing fees, conferences and seminars which are related to your current position. John Wilson and Nicole Hittle are the two COPPEA Chapter members on the PDF Committee, who along with other City members, review PDF requests. Typical requests include conferences, license fees, seminars, license renewal fees, professional membership dues, reference material, certification study guide, books, review courses, webinars, language courses, workshops, college courses,



online trainings, symposiums, summits, technical materials and short courses.

**Plan ahead!** If you know that you will need funding for a required class or license fee, apply ASAP. In Winter 2014, some PDF requests were wait-listed after COPPEA members exhausted the PDF. Those members on the wait list ended-up being funded due to last-minute cancellations; however, don't count on

there being cancellations when you apply!

In 2013/2014, all but \$700 of the \$125,000 allocated for 2013/2014 was used. The remaining \$700 was rolled to the 2014/2015 fund. This shows that the PDF committee successfully managed the fund for 2013/2014. Please visit [www.ptel7.org/coppea](http://www.ptel7.org/coppea) for more information on the PDF.

## Protect Confidentiality!

### Use Your Personal Email When Discussing Union Matters



Because emails sent on the City email system are considered public record, using a personal email address is the preferred and recommended way for you to communicate with Local 17 staff, Chapter Stewards and members, and other Union members. Emails from personal accounts insure a higher level of confidentiality.

Nikola Davidson, Local 17's Special Projects Coordinator, is beginning to collect personal email addresses for all COPPEA Chapter members to add to the Union database. Please take a moment to send your personal email address to Nikola at: [nikola@ptel7.org](mailto:nikola@ptel7.org). **Your address will stay private with us.**



### COPPEA Chapter Member Urges City Council to Approve Transportation User Fee

COPPEA Chapter Secretary/Treasurer Paul Cone testified before the City Council on May 29 in support of the Transportation User Fee. This fee will provide much needed funds for transportation projects throughout the City, and to stabilize the City's labor force. Cone, who has worked as a GIS Technician II at PBOT and now at BTS, said: "A stable and reliable funding stream is crucial for achieving PBOT's mission to plan, build, manage and maintain an effective and safe transportation system."

# Utility Oversight Commission Holds First Meeting

On July 15, the Utility Oversight Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) convened its first meeting. The BRC is the result of a commitment made by Mayor Hales and Commissioner Fish during the May Water District initiative campaign to investigate transparency, accountability, and confidence in the Water Bureau and the Bureau of Environmental Services. Local 17 staff attended a meeting in late May with labor and environment partners where Hales and Fish thanked Local 17 for its work during the campaign and also asked for feedback on the BRC.

City Council tasked the BRC with providing results of their work by November, which would allow the potential incorporation of recommendations in the 2015-2016 budget process. The BRC has scheduled ten meetings including two sessions reserved for public comment. All of these meetings are open to public observers.

Chaired by former US Attorney Dwight Holton, the 12-member commission includes representatives of environmental groups, public and private utilities, businesses, labor, and public health. Barbara Byrd, Secretary Treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO, is serving as the representative of labor perspectives on the BRC.

During the first meeting, the diversity in experience

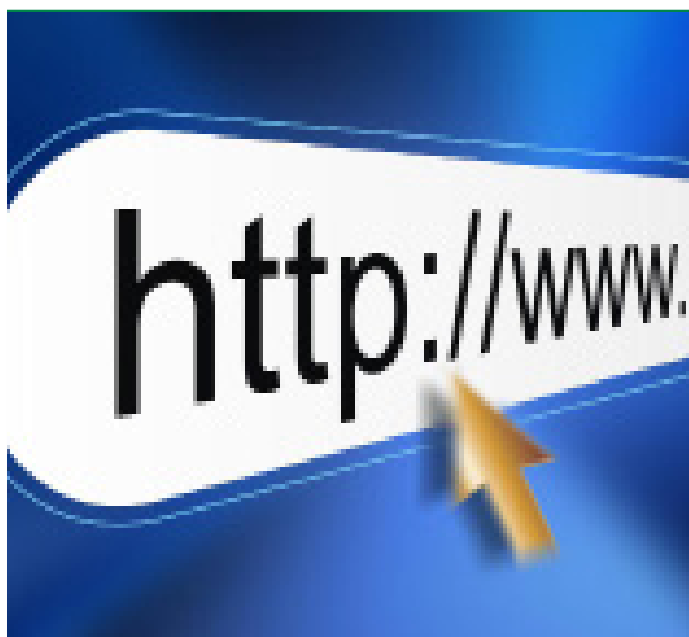
with utility issues was pointed out, with several members noting that they had little exposure to the specific subject-matter to be discussed. This diversity is intentional in the design of the BRC, and the first several meetings will be occupied primarily with presentations by the Bureaus about their budget processes, oversight, and operations.

In the first meeting, the Mayor and Commissioner Fish made clear statements that the intent of the BRC is neither to micromanage the bureaus, nor to dramatically restructure the City's commission form of government. The Citizens' Utility Board (CUB) which was recently contracted to provide analysis of the City's utility rates will also be releasing results in the fall, and CUB's report will more likely delve into the details of the operations of the utilities. Rather, the BRC will focus on issues such as council oversight of the bureaus, and public involvement and communications.

PTE Local 17 plans on actively attending these meetings and providing input when possible. Additionally, all meeting documents will be available online during the BRC's charter period. If you are interested in addressing the committee directly, there will be two public briefings before the BRC. Please visit their site for details: <http://www.portlandonline.com/Fish/index.cfm?c=65200>.

## ***Know Your Contract – Rights and Benefits Training – September 23!***

Mark your calendars for the next Local 17 training on your rights and benefits as a member, to be held on Tues., Sept. 23, from 12-1 p.m. in Portland Building room TBD. The training is open to all COPPEA Chapter members and is a great opportunity to gain a better understanding of your contract. Lunch is provided -- make sure to RSVP to [nikola@pte17.org](mailto:nikola@pte17.org) by Sept. 19!



## **The COPPEA Chapter has a new website!**

# [pte17.org/coppea](http://pte17.org/coppea)

The former COPPEA website ([www.coppea.org](http://www.coppea.org)) is now inactive. When you log onto that page, you will be redirected to a page on the PTE Local 17 site: [www.pte17.org/coppea](http://www.pte17.org/coppea). Please update your bookmarks and look at [pte17.org/coppea](http://pte17.org/coppea) for updated information on the Local 17 COPPEA Chapter.

On [pte17.org](http://pte17.org), you can also find other member resources and learn what members are doing in other Local 17 Chapters.

## Member Profile: Stephen Rae

Stephen Rae works in the Extra Strength Sewer Charge (ESSC) program at the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES). ESSC assesses fees on high strength wastewater users, such as food establishments. These fees are used to address extra wastewater treatment costs associated with the sewage output. This costly (and extra) treatment is necessary to preserve the environment and meet regulations. Stephen classifies and sets the rates, and also performs outreach to the users.

Prior to coming to the City of Portland one and one-half years ago, Stephen worked in the private sector as a consulting engineer. He works at the Water Pollution Control Lab (WPCL) in North Portland.

Stephen is also a new PTE Local 17, COPPEA Chapter Steward. He became acquainted with Local 17 during his volunteer work on the Stop the Bull Run Takeover (see article below on Ballot Measure 26-156). He decided to become a COPPEA Chapter Steward because he wants to preserve unions, and the rights and conditions of workers. As Stephen points out “public sector unions are under attack.” He knows that union members have a voice with management that other employees don’t have. Stephen also figures that by being active in Local 17 he will learn about what is going on in the City. Thank you Stephen for your commitment to your union!



## Thanks for Voting 'NO' on 26-156!

In May, Portland citizens overwhelmingly voted to protect their City and environment, and to keep the water and sewer services within the control of the City of Portland. The margin of victory on ballot measure 26-156 was nearly 3:1.

**STOP**  
**CORPORATE**  
**POLLUTERS**  
**NOON 26-156**

The decisive victory was due in large part to the grassroots efforts of volunteers, as well as PTE Local 17’s partnership with the Stop the Bull Run Takeover Campaign, and its contribution of countless staff hours and financial resources totaling \$4,000. PTE Local 17 would again like to thank those COPPEA Chapter members, friends and family who also committed time and money to the campaign.

PTE Local 17’s partnership with labor and political leaders in Portland during the campaign will continue to be of tremendous value to PTE Local 17, COPPEA Chapter members. PTE Local 17 has already met with Mayor Hales, Commissioner Fish and other labor leaders to discuss how labor can continue to be involved in protecting the City’s water and sewer services and stabilizing the labor force within those services. (See article on Utility Oversight Commission, previous page).

### COPPEA Officers & Stewards

**Gerry Verhoef, President**  
**Rachel Whiteside, Vice President**  
**Paul Cone, Secretary/Treasurer**

**Bureau of Environmental Services**  
Victoria Busch, Karyn Hanson, Angie Tomlinson, Ana Brophy,  
Andrew Neuman, Stephen Rae, John Wilson

**Bureau of Technology Services**  
Keith Holland, Brian Ventura, Katharine Enriques

**Portland Bureau of Transportation**  
Ruthanne Bennett, John Wood, Cate Perry,  
Gudrun (Goodie) Free

**Bureau of Development Services**  
Priscilla Partch, Lizbeth Dance

**Bureau of Planning and Sustainability**  
Tyler Bump

**Portland Water Bureau**  
Jamie Wilde, Mia Sabanovic

**Shared (Fire, Police, Revenue, Bureau of  
Government Relations, City Attorney’s Office)**  
Karen Obana

**Bureau of Parks and Recreation**  
Aulani Johnson