



For Immediate Release

December 30, 2015

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Avakian announces major wage settlement that will direct \$2.5 million to 325 workers

Agreement represents the largest wage collection in agency's history

PORTLAND, OR—Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian today announced a major \$2.5 million wage settlement for 325 employees who worked on a public works project for Southern Oregon University (SOU) comprised of a dining hall and two student residences.

The agreement represents the largest wage settlement in the agency's history.

"This settlement is a result of an extensive, multi-year effort by our Prevailing Wage Rate Unit to ensure that these workers receive every dollar they've earned," said Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian. "Our agency is committed to strong and fair enforcement so that employees on public projects are paid the full wages owed under Oregon law."

Under terms of the agreement, the university has directed an initial \$1,508,542.88 to BOLI on behalf of 179 workers. The agency mailed payments to these workers today.

For the remaining 146 workers – collectively owed around \$1 million – BOLI will contact each worker to secure individual releases of claims so that the agency can collect and distribute the additional payments. The agency anticipates that all additional workers will receive payment by May.

A copy of the settlement agreement is available [here](#).

Starting in late 2013, BOLI's Wage and Hour Division initiated a series of prevailing wage audits after questions arose about the SOU project during a separate investigation.

The prevailing wage inquiry – comprised of 80 audits — determined that 44 contractors and subcontractors on the project owed \$2,569,387 to workers on the project.

Investigators first sent wage demands for alleged unpaid prevailing wages on or around December 23, 2014. Prior to the \$2.5 million settlement, the agency secured about \$52,000 in wage payments.

Construction of the residence halls and dining hall began in 2012, with all three buildings completed in the first week of September 2013. The buildings replace the Cascade Complex, a single structure with residence halls and a common dining area. The same architect and general contractor performed work on the project, with most first-tier subcontractors working on all three buildings. In addition, investigators found that the university administered the construction as a single project.

The agreement releases SOU and other parties from future wage claims stemming from the project while admitting no wrongdoing or liability on the disputed wages.

Any public contracting agency, contractor or subcontractor can contact BOLI's Prevailing Wage Rate Unit to [request a determination](#) about whether a project is a public works that requires payment of prevailing wage rates.

In April 2012, the prevailing wage rates in Jackson County required workers on public projects earn the following rates:

Occupation	Oregon Rate/Fringe
Carpenter (Grp 1&2)	\$28.45/\$10.48
Electrician	\$29.78/\$14.44
Laborer	\$24.25/\$10.01
Painter	\$20.37/\$6.54
Plumber	\$36.69/\$21.14
Roofer	\$22.25/\$7.46
Tender to Mason Trades	\$25.45/\$11.39

(Source: [2012 Prevailing Wage Rate Book, Jackson and Josephine Counties](#))

The outcome represents the second record-setting settlement for the agency in 2015. In January, the agency reached a \$2.4 million settlement with Daimler Trucks North America, the [largest civil rights settlement in BOLI history](#).

Employees or construction contractors with prevailing wage issues may contact the Prevailing Wage Rate Unit by calling (971) 673-0839 or emailing pwemail@boli.state.or.us.

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