



# OPEN SHOP GAZETTE

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An article in the *Orange County Register* on May 24, 2007 states that the "State may fall short of Skilled Workers". "California probably won't be able to attract enough educated workers from other states and from abroad to meet its workforce needs and economic projections in the next two decades, a new study says. By 2025, two out of every five jobs will require a college degree, according to the Public Policy Institute of California. At the same time, only 32 percent of adults in the state will have degrees."

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The cover story in the May 17, 2007 issue of *U.S.A. Today* says that "Utilities brace for worker shortage, just as USA gears up for wave of new construction." The article highlights a 47 year old worker who is considering retiring in about 7 years after already having worked for the Dominion Virginia Power Company for 28 years. "Yet there aren't nearly enough young power industry workers in the pipeline to take their place. The nation faces a shortage of utility workers just as it gears up for the biggest wave of construction in decades to meet soaring power demand. The crunch is already affecting

many cities – slowing new hookups for electric service, delaying post-storm power restorations and forcing utilities to skimp on maintenance. It cuts across job categories, from line workers and plant operators to senior engineers."

"About half the USA's 400,000 power industry workers, largely baby boomers, are eligible to retire in the next five to ten years, according to Carnegie Mellon University's Electricity Industry Center. The industry already has shed about 40% of its workforce since 1990 in response to deregulation, the center says." And companies have shut down or scaled back training programs. That undercut the main appeal of a utility job: stable, lifelong employment. Today, high school graduates "are looking at jobs with computers, sitting in an office, rather than working with their hands. Never mind that a line worker is among the country's highest-paid jobs that don't require a college degree. Average annual salaries with overtime, are \$75,000, and most line workers today make more than \$100,000."

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*Orange County Register* Columnist Martin Wisckol wrote in the February 12, 2007 issue about

the recent Supervisor election. Janet Nguyen was elected the newest Orange County Supervisor in a district that covers Garden Grove, Santa Ana and Westminster. Mr. Wisckol wrote that "And the loser is...the unions. Public labor union spent \$215,000 on behalf of Tom Umberg in the supervisor's race, as they sought a friend on a board that is becoming increasingly vocal about the need for county employee pension reform. They got third place for their effort." The unions spent an even larger amount last year when they tried to defeat John Moorlach, that story was also covered in the *Open Shop Gazette*.

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We must support apprenticeship training at every level. Every year more people leave the construction industry with fewer and fewer stepping up to take their place.

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Please mark your calendars to attend the Open Shop Council meeting scheduled for Thursday, October 18, 2007, 12:00 pm., at the Hyatt Grand Champions, Indian Wells.