

Monterey Bay *Bulletin*

Labor Contracts Update

The Travelodge Conflict: What People are Saying

“Even though the Travelodge is a small hotel with only a handful of workers, the union’s fight has been relentless.”—Travel Weekly, 3-28-06

“Travelodge, 2030 N Fremont, reports demonstrators in front of business ... using a bullhorn, disturbing guests”—Monterey Police Department Case Log, 2-24-06

“I had hoped that by now you [Kilsoo Seo] would have been able to accommodate the concerns of your employees ...”—Congressman Sam Farr, 6-9-05

“I wish to reiterate my earlier request that you negotiate with UNITE HERE Local 483 ...”—California Assembly-member John Laird, 6-14-05

“Reached at his video store in Alaska, [Kilsoo Seo] declined to comment ...”—Monterey County Herald, 1-27-06

International News: Monterey Bay Travelodge Conflict Boycott Continues as Protests Rage On

The international travel industry publication, *Travel Weekly*, features the conflict between workers and owner, Kilsoo Seo, at the Monterey Bay Travelodge in its March 27, 2006 cover story.

“What has unfolded outside [the] Monterey Bay Travelodge, day in and day out for almost two years, is a job action that hotels, convention and visitors bureaus and other players in the U.S. tourism industry fear could blemish their own economic landscapes in the months ahead.”

Travel Weekly adds, “[The] 13 unionized hotel employees – at times accompanied by high-profile, national labor leaders – form picket

lines, carry signs and stage[d] more than 80 rallies to protest low wages and vanishing healthcare benefits.”

“The workers have periodically been joined by local political figures and hundreds of citizen supporters. More than once, [the hotel] has called the Monterey Police Department ... As many as 2,400 citizen supporters have walked the picket lines over the past 17



Monterey Bay Travelodge picket-line photograph appearing in cover story of March 27, 2006 *Travel Weekly*.

months, helping to keep the protests and boycott alive.”

“Even though the Travelodge is a small hotel with only a handful of workers, the union’s fight has been relentless ...”

“Seo, who lives in Alaska, could not be reached for comment,” *Travel Weekly* reported.

Hotel Workers Rising Campaign Grows in Monterey

The *Monterey County Weekly* (2/23/06) reports on the national Hotel Workers Rising campaign, “[S]tate labor unions are making a comeback ... UNITE HERE, a labor organization representing 90,000 hospitality industry workers nationwide, kicked off a campaign ... in four critical US cities, including San Francisco and Los Angeles. The idea is to build momentum as workers head into contract renegotiations at hundreds of hotels this summer.”

“In Monterey County, that includes nearly 1,200 workers at 10 hotels in Carmel, Monterey and Pacific Grove. Most of these workers’ existing contracts will expire July 31 ...”

Travel Weekly (3/27/06) adds, “Contracts begin expiring in July and August in Los Angeles, New York, Toronto, Boston, Honolulu and San Francisco. Whether it will be a long, hot summer of labor disputes and difficult negotiations, with cities sweating out the result, remains to be

seen. But the union’s aggressive campaign, with rallies across the country and multiple unionization drives, spell showdown for many interested parties.”

According to UNITE HERE’s Monterey leader, Leonard O’Neill, the unions coming together in the Hotel Workers Rising movement “want to turn hospitality jobs—which can’t be outsourced—into middle-class jobs with middle-class wages” (*Monterey County Weekly*, 2/23/06).