

Picketing campaign expands

Journal Staff Report

The Los Angeles Times this month reported that in recent years, "Shame On" banners and fliers have become fixtures on the national labor landscape, going up outside countless businesses big and small, from housing projects in Phoenix to a bowling alley on Long Island.

Many of the targets have used general contractors who hired nonunion subcontractors. But sometimes the links have been more indirect. A Tulsa, Okla., country club was bannered because a member headed a nonunion contracting firm. In Bakersfield, Calif., banners declared "Shame on Tony Bennett" and "Shame on the Fox Theater" when the singer performed there in 2006. The event was a fundraiser for a medical center with subcontractors unacceptable to the union.

Some unions disapprove of bannereting, which often targets businesses not directly involved in labor disputes. And others — including attorneys for the National Labor Relations Board — have argued that they are coercive, unfair and possibly unlawful.

Eleven bannereting cases are awaiting judgment by the NLRB, but three of the federal agency's five seats have been unfilled for two years. Nobody knows when congressional gridlock over the appointments will end or whether a bannereting ban would stand up.

Justin Weidner is chief of staff of the Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters, a 65,000-member union operating in five states including New Mexico that is behind much of the bannereting. "We believe it's an effective tactic," he said. "That's why we continue to use it."

Still, some campaigns have drawn critics even within union ranks.

Bob Oedy, an International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers organizer, said the tactic "can also be very counterproductive."

Business

Outlook

MONEY RATES ♦ PAGE 16



MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2010

A BIT MORE COMPLICATED

Columnist Quigley explores the myths of the Boston Tea Party and settling of the West.

PAGE 3