

Faces of Free Trade and Job Loss: Confronting Oregon's Shifting Economy

The Oregon Fair Trade Campaign's
Oregon Stories Project



“You don’t realize when you work someplace for 29 years, it’s more of a way of life than a job. It’s more of a community of people... You’re spending 8, 10, 12 hours a day with these people; it does make a difference. It was a really hard adjustment to lose that, to go find someplace and start over.” -Steve Bradbury, Bend

Introduction

Working families understand better than anyone that when elected officials uncritically support “free trade” deals good-paying Oregon jobs end up outsourced to other countries.

Decisions on trade policy should be based on the experiences of people whose livelihoods are directly affected by international trade agreements. Charting a course to policies that promote prosperity across borders begins by confronting the failures of NAFTA-style trade agreements.

From inception to implementation, trade policy is inaccessible, undemocratic and excludes input from ordinary citizens:

- Negotiations to create trade agreements are held in closed-door meetings.
- Disputes over trade are settled in secret tribunals.
- Congress has no authority to change trade agreements, only to vote for or against them.

When Oregonians are given a chance to talk about trade and foreign competition, we have a lot to say. This report draws on interviews with more than 100 Oregonians whose jobs were lost as a result of international free trade agreements.

As the list of trade-related plant closures and layoffs grows, the voices of Oregon’s displaced workers become increasingly difficult to ignore. This report lays out the impacts of NAFTA-style trade policies on working people across the state in those affected workers’ own words.

Important themes run through many of the stories the Oregon Fair Trade Campaign (ORFTC) documented:

- Free trade fuels outsourcing, eliminating family-wage jobs and leaving low-wage service sector work in its wake.
- Effects of job loss go beyond the individual family level, impacting entire communities and local economies.
- Individual communities, particularly rural communities, endure the worst of these economic shifts.
- Many of the facilities outsourced are profitable and competitive.
- Job retraining programs are vital but they are being used as fix-all for trade policies gone wrong.

With this report, the Oregon Fair Trade Campaign moves the jobs lost due to free trade from an afterthought in the debate on trade policy to the central question of how trade policy affects working families in Oregon and across the country.

The policy directives for future trade policy included in the conclusion of this report are based on the observations and experience of working people across the state.

The Story Behind the Stories Project

In 2004, the Oregon Fair Trade Campaign asked, “Who in Oregon is most directly affected by free trade agreements like NAFTA, and how are their voices prioritized in the fight for fair trade?”

ORFTC launched the Stories Project to establish a forum for Oregonians to share their stories about how free trade policies have affected their livelihoods, families and communities. Project staff and volunteers sat down with more than 100 Oregonians in more than 20 communities—displaced workers from a wide range of industries, holding a wide range of perspectives.

The content and conclusions of this report are based on those conversations.

Stories were shared through personal interviews that took place at kitchen tables, favorite restaurants and workplace break rooms. In the process, the Stories Project built a statewide network of people with similar experiences and engaged Oregon’s elected officials about standing up for fairer trade policies.

The Stories Project received support for our work from two Oregon-based foundations: McKenzie River Gathering Foundation and the Ralph L. Smith Foundation. Additional support came from the Oregon AFL-CIO and other labor unions including the ILWU Columbia River District Basin Council, AFSCME Council 75, SEIU 503, CWA Oregon State Council and IAM Machinists 1005 and 63. With that

funding, ORFTC hired Kari Koch, an experienced labor organizer, to coordinate the project.

“The highest level our membership [International Association of Machinists Local 1005] was ever at was 25,000 members. Now we’re down to 8,000 members. Some of that is due to consolidation and automation. But in the last ten years since NAFTA was implemented, the biggest single reason for job loss are the trade agreements that entice employers to look elsewhere and cause job losses for our members.”
– Fred Lamb, Vancouver (WA)

Scope of the Problem

Free trade is a common thread in hundreds of plant closures and layoffs across the state. It is not always recognized as a cause for job loss. Mismanagement or changes in consumer habits are more immediately apparent than global shifts in production, but trade and foreign competition consistently influences decisions to close or outsource work.

When major employers in Oregon communities—sometimes even entire industries—decide to outsource work across the border, it can create sudden deficits in family-wage jobs.

Why Oregon Jobs Leave

Rumors abound for who’s to blame for plant closures:

JR Simplot potato processing plant in Hermiston took a fatal hit with the surge in popularity of low-carb diets.

Amalgamated Sugar processing plant in Nyssa was the victim of artificial sweeteners.

KorPine plywood mill in Bend was conquered by the spotted owl.

Plants close for many reasons, but trade was the common factor to all three closures, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

When the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was first proposed, it came with promises of economic opportunities and higher standards of living across the board.

The last twelve years did not deliver NAFTA's promises. In fact, the number of displaced workers grows every year.

The Oregon Fair Trade Coalition estimates that 68,000 Oregonians lost their jobs due to free trade policies since NAFTA went into affect in 1994.

The U.S. Department of Labor tracks plant closures and layoffs due to outsourcing and foreign competition as part of its Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. Under the TAA program, workers or their employers can apply for federally subsidized job retraining benefits. Examining TAA records, ORFTC found 32,000 Oregonians certified as displaced by trade.

Figures put out by the Department of Labor exclude many workers who should be on the list:

- The TAA program only applies to workers in manufacturing of a tangible item like plywood, computer chips or French fries, so the lists ignore service sector workers like telemarketers or truckers who ship finished products.
- Fishermen, growers, ranchers and small business owners are not part of the U.S. Department of Labor tally, even though Chilean farmed salmon imports undercut Oregon fishermen; Mexican broccoli added yet another crop to the list of food staples that are no longer commercially viable in Oregon; Canadian beef imports depress beef prices for Oregon ranchers; and

Wal-Mart stores stocked with discount Asian imports supplant countless small businesses.

- The Machinist's union estimates that for every manufacturing job lost, five to seven service jobs are lost, from the suppliers, consultants and maintenance contractors who supported production to the restaurant around the corner that served lunch.
- The TAA lists also do not include shutdowns or layoffs that do not apply for the program. In some cases, employers may attempt to protect their public image by denying that trade and outsourcing are driving layoffs even when production is, in fact, moving overseas.

The estimate of 68,000 Oregonians displaced by trade is just that—an estimate; but it is by no means an exaggerated one. The Economic Policy Institute put the number of jobs lost due NAFTA nationwide at 1,673,454 in 2002.¹

These numbers are more than abstract statistics. Each number represents a person with a story of how job loss affected their family's livelihood, access to healthcare and the long-term stability of their community.



Roger Hanson outside of Representative Greg Walden's Bend office, preparing to deliver a letter from KorPine employees about how free trade affected their lives.

Moment of Impact

There is a moment of impact when abstract free trade policies cause very real and immediate consequences for Oregonians: job loss, plant closures or a crop that's cheaper to plow under than harvest at a loss.

For Bob Faust, his moment was the announcement that Amalgamated Sugar was closing the factory where he worked in Nyssa for fifteen years.

"We came to work on a Wednesday for summer maintenance. Usually we'd meet at 8:00am for toolbox meetings where our supervisor would tell us what project he wanted us to start on first. Our supervisor didn't come down and he didn't show up so people started to think, 'Maybe there is something to [the rumors about a plant closure].' Nobody knows. Finally, at 9am our supervisor showed up. He looked sick. He looked upset. You could tell that there was something bad going on. He said, 'There's going to be a general meeting in the lunchroom at 10:00. Don't do anything.

Don't touch a thing.' So we knew something was up.

"At 10:00 we all assembled in the lunchroom. Nasser, the plant manager came in the lunchroom and made the announcement that the plant was closing down indefinitely."

-Bob Faust, Nyssa

For entrepreneur Steve Gern, his moment came when he learned that Chinese imports were undercutting his small business' niche assembling carrying cases for massage tables.

"In 2002, John, the guy who got me started in the bag business, called me in and he said, 'Here's a bag I'm getting from China. It's \$8.50 delivered.' As soon as I saw that bag, I said, 'I'm out of business.' To make that bag here, it costs me \$15 just to buy the fabric, not the thread or the bindings, no labor. The fact that that same bag would cost about \$26 to manufacture here and they're selling it completed here for \$8.50." -Steve Gern, Glide

For Steve Nitschke, it came when Weyerhaeuser closed the mill he worked in North Bend.

"They took all of the employees down to a local hotel in a big room with security guards and broke the news to us about the closure. They brought in a short-term manager to do it. I don't think a long-term manager could have done it. A lot of the salaried and hourly employees knew each other since high school." -Steve Nitschke, North Bend

For Ben Joy, his moment of impact was learning that research and development jobs at InFocus were about to head over to Malaysia to join the manufacturing jobs that had already been outsourced.

"After approximately 10 years, the current management had leaked and I heard from outside sources that I was being let go. Which is a wonderful thing after 10 years [heavy sarcasm]. So I walk in and at this point I know I'm going to be let go and within half an hour I was walked to my car." -Ben Joy, Portland

There is no guarantee that a laid-off worker will not be laid off again in their next job. Several participants in interviews for this report found new work after being laid off, only to be laid off a second time.

Don Eder lost his job at the AgriFrozen in Woodburn.

"I worked at the Woodburn cannery/ frozen food processor. I did everything from stand at the belt to pick off rotten fruit to driving the forklift. Now I package metal parts at a sheet metal operation in Salem who are also closing, laying off, because they cannot make it with international competition."
-Don Eder, Salem

Gary Wampole of Willamina became a millwright after losing his job at AgriFrozen Foods.

"I needed a job. I have a family and responsibilities too. So I took that job. Now I work out here as a millwright at Hampton lumber which could be affected by free trade too. It's the same thing."
-Gary Wampole, Willamina

Outsourcing is an epidemic that cuts across many of the divides that define Oregon. It affects blue-collar factory workers and white-collar management. It leads to plant closures in urban factories, suburban office parks and small town food processing plants. It displaces native born and immigrant workers, women and men, Democrats, Republicans and Independents.

Job Loss and Community Impacts

"I worked at AgriFrozen almost right out of school... I was a third generation worker there. It has supported my family for a long

time. My grandmothers worked there, my aunts and uncles, my mom, my brother and sister. Everyone in my family has worked in that facility for a long time and it was hard when it closed."
-Gary Wampole, Willamina

The problem of trade-related job loss is compounded in cases where family members work together for the same employer.

Peggy Clark lives in Woodburn but worked at AgriFrozen's Salem facility. She worked as a Quality Control Specialist, while her husband, Elton, worked there as a refrigerator technician. Peggy describes how, even in a town as large as Salem, jobs are interconnected for family members.

"It was hard. My husband and I, our whole total family income was there—but a lot of people, their mothers, their brothers, their sisters, their whole entire family for generations worked there. So that part was hardest because your whole family took a big fat hit." -Peggy Elton, Salem

Domingo Vargas worked as an educator in retraining for Spanish-speaking workers who lost jobs in 2005 at the JR Simplot potato processing plant in Hermiston. In an interview, he spoke of the impacts the layoffs had on the families involved.

"They're having conversations with their kids about cutting out family outings, vacations of any kind, scaling back just to be able to afford the basics of food and shelter. What kind of message does that send their kids? Folks in the Latino community have strong family values. When families start to disintegrate as a result of financial stress, divorce, tension, that's when kids go out on the street looking for the support from gangs, alcohol and drugs."
-Domingo Vargas, Hermiston

Tight-Knit Community in Bend

“There is a neighborhood just to the south of Bend proper that houses a notably high number of workers from the KorPine facility. This is a nice middle-class, working-class area that use to lie much farther out of the city than it now does, as the city encroaches. The houses are modest, but seem spacious and moderately rural with their ample acreage and wooded lots.

“As I was making the initial calls to Bend workers, again and again the person I talked to would steer me to their neighbor, asking me if they should invite their coworker from three doors down to the interview.

“It was clear to me that with or without KorPine, this is still a tight-knit community.”

-Kari Koch, Stories Project Coordinator

A Greater Sense of Family

In smaller communities with limited long-term high-wage employment options, it is not surprising that many people from the same family or household work for the same employer.

A primary theme from the Stories Project, however, is that manufacturing facilities provide workers with an expanded sense of family and community. When people are laid off from their jobs, an entire component of their lives is left behind: relationships, coworkers and friends—the second family.

The recurrence of the “family” theme is more than just nostalgia for lost jobs. It points to a change in the quality of jobs left after outsourcing closes down facilities where people worked their entire lives and earned enough to support their families at home.

Barb Martin, former worker at the Simplot plant, articulates these sentiments when she says:

“I hate the fact that Simplot shut their doors. I hate the fact that I have lost all my ‘family members.’ We were all close. I spent more time with those people than I did with my own family. I gave my heart and soul, like those [other] people did to that company, and for them to do us like this, is awful.”

-Barb Martin, Hermiston

The emotional toll of losing your job is exacerbated when the job has been a staple feature in your life for decades. The facilities that are closing due to free trade agreements—those that are outsourcing and those that cannot compete with foreign competition—are eliminating workers who have dedicated their lives to a company.

Diego Castellanoz shares his experience at the Nyssa facility:

“I worked at Amalgamated Sugar, a sugar manufacturing process plant. I began working there right out of high school. So, I’ve been there 28 ½ years. I’ve basically grown up there. I also have three other brothers that worked at Amalgamated.”

-Diego Castellanoz, Nyssa

The Ripple Effect on the Community

Outsourcing and mass layoffs do not happen in a vacuum, they have a tangible affect on the community at large.

Local Leaders Making a Difference

“Roger Hanson, his brother Donald and his son Brian worked at and were laid-off from KorPine. Roger, now a retiree, was an active union member, President of his local for many years. A fiery man who appeared to take no gruff from anyone was the reason for my successes in Bend. He is a dedicated man, fought hard for his union, for his fellow workers and for working-people as a whole. He fought for family-wages; he visited politicians to decry the supposed benefits of free trade agreements.

“I met up with Roger at the senior center where his son Brian and his band were playing a mid-day set. At a table in the lobby he gave me the resources to contact his former coworkers and told me how he had organized an information session earlier that week about the new Medicare drug plan, because he thought seniors needed more information. Roger is who the Stories Project is meant for.

“He helped get his former coworkers to sign on to a letter describing the devastation of free trade on Bend, then delivered this letter to Rep Greg Walden’s office, demanding that the KorPine story be heard.”

-Kari Koch, Stories Project Coordinator

Owen Froerer, a farmer outside of Nyssa and supplier of sugar beets to the closing facility, makes this point when he says:

“When you get \$11-13 million payroll pulled out of town the size of Nyssa, population 3,100, you have problems. Then what about the people that were contracted for the sugar plant: the guys that brought in the lime, the guys that cleaned the mill and the guys that made

the paper sacks for the sugar. Those people are all going broke too.

“My wife and daughter run a dress shop in Nyssa. They figure with the sugar factory closing, and the economics of the area, they will eventually have to close their doors too.” –Owen Froerer, Nyssa

A plant shutting its doors most directly affects the workers, suppliers and distributors—those who directly handled the products of the facility. However, Evelyn Marshall, a former mill worker from Central Oregon, expands upon this when she notes:

“I don’t think Weyerhaeuser realized what an affect shutting that down had on this community. Not only the employees, but all the vendors. We had tons of them and we bought our stuff locally if we could.”
-Evelyn Marshall, Bend

Peggy Clark of Woodburn, echoes this sentiment.

“I could see a big change in the town. Once that went out [AgriFrozen] there’s hardly anything out there anymore. The whole town itself took a big hit. Not only was it us and the vegetables that were grown by the farmers, but the ones providing the material... it continually snowballed.”
-Peggy Clark, Woodburn

The affect of a closure on a community is similar whether, as in Evelyn’s case, it is a mill of less than 200 workers, or as in Peggy’s instance, a plant of over 700 workers.

Though rarely discussed by elected officials, reported in the media or apparent in official statistics, many Oregonians recognize the economic collateral damage right away.

In the reaches of the ripple effect are the public services that are supported by the taxes of closed facilities. Diego Castellanoz, former mayor of Nyssa and

worker at Amalgamated Sugar describes their situation.

**"This community loses about \$1 million a year from this one shut down, including pay from workers. People are leaving the area to look for work and cause a loss of \$400,000 for the school system. This is a huge blow to the town."
-Diego Castellanoz, Nyssa**

Everything from schools to sewers, roads to law enforcement, takes a substantial budget cut when a large employer leaves town. This is especially true in rural communities that lack the diverse income bases of large cities. The exodus of workers looking for new opportunities brings down property values. It seems difficult for rural and smaller communities to absorb significant losses, as in the case of Nyssa where one company was the major employer for the entire area.

While communities, cities and industries as a whole must absorb the consequences of lost jobs and missing industry, laid-off workers take the direct blow and are the first to feel the pressures of free trade. They are cut off from their income, health benefits, routines and way of life.

Retraining

When NAFTA was implemented in 1994, the federal government recognized that there would be substantial job loss. Some employers would move across the border; others would fall victim to foreign competition. Congress updated an existing program called Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) to provide training to laid-off workers attempting to transition to new jobs.

Proponents of NAFTA use TAA to deflect criticism, claiming that job-retraining programs compensate for free trade's negative impacts.

The retraining program is the only federally-funded initiative to take some of the pressure off local communities hit by free trade. These programs are necessary and valuable to workers and communities, but they are not a solution to the damages of free trade nor are they comprehensive enough to answer all of the demands created by layoffs.

Some politicians argue that the problem is not jobs leaving communities, but that workers are not adaptable enough, educated enough or technically skilled enough to easily navigate the marketplace. These politicians believe that TAA programs could fix the problems with the American workforce, providing workers with the skills to transition into new jobs.

Opinions on the TAA program vary widely among Oregonians who have lost their jobs due to free trade policy. Many went through the program; others did not apply or even qualify. Everyone agrees that the program can play an important function, but many people also identify obvious under-addressed problems: the hardships of being a returning student, the lack of jobs available post-retraining and the bias against older workers.

For many that want to take advantage of the program, TAA is not a viable option because unemployment is too little to support a family, and the retraining requirements are so stringent that working full time while completing the program is not a realistic option.

Joe Hamblin, a Klamath Falls mill worker says:

"It wasn't possible to get a comparable wage job with retraining. At the factory we were making an average of \$14/hr with full benefits. Your unemployment only comes out to about \$9/hr. When you are raising a family, going back to school and get half of what you are making before is almost impossible. Some people were able to go out after the mill and do better, make more. But those are extraordinary circumstances of people that previously had college degrees or who had a husband/wife with a really well-paying job." – Joe Hamblin, Klamath Falls

Angie Kile of Hermiston is the person who the retraining program was built for: younger, able to survive on unemployment and willing to transition into entirely new skill sets. She comments on her ability to take full advantage of the opportunities.

"It was great for me because I was able to take up on the opportunity. A lot of people aren't. They cannot financially afford to live on unemployment while they are going to college. They've got mouths to feed. I've got a husband who feeds our mouths for us. Thank God. If I was a single mom there's no way I could have done this." -Angie Kile, Hermiston

The concept of retraining is not the problem. The biggest difficulties come when applying it to the job market. Switching jobs is about more than just a new title. It is starting at the bottom of the seniority ladder, adjusting to new work-site situations and maneuvering out of physical jobs and into technical and desk jobs.

Joan Miller, 62, a former machinist at Freightliner trucks of Portland speaks to her experiences with TAA and career changing.

"I took retraining and the possibility of going for another job. That helped me enhance my computer skills... There's not supposed to be discrimination but to use

those [new computer] skills would have been almost impossible. It left me with the training of a person coming out of high school or a crash course in business school. If you're quick and cute, you can make it. But a little old lady like me, that doesn't work. I worked in a manufacturing environment for years and I've learned to tolerate a few obscenities coming around and been able to field them myself. It just doesn't work in the atmosphere of a secretary." -Joan Miller, Portland

Joan's story is not unusual. People over 55 often find themselves too old to start fresh and too young to retire.

Retraining Isn't Enough

Oakley Taylor, former mill worker in Bend, explains the challenges of being forced to make midlife career changes:

"I took advantage of the schooling program... I haven't been to school for 20 years, so that was a real big deal for me. I got my associates degree in civil engineering. I'm not even using my degree, that's the worst thing. I went through all this and I'm still not using it. I truly worked so hard to get this degree.

"The problem being, I think, number one, I'm not in my twenties out there starting a new career and, number two, people want job experience. I've got the degree, but I've got no job experience."

Steve Gern, a small business owner from the Roseburg area, expresses his dissatisfaction with the gap between what his options are and what he would love to do.

"Now, educating people is fine, [but] I'm going on 60 years old. What are they going to do? Make me into a computer programmer? I don't even want it. I want to work and have a viable business and I can't because of outsourcing. Period. Case closed." -Steve Gern, Glide

Many workers interviewed chose to not take the retraining at all. Instead they muscle through to another job and take their chances. Barb Martin of Hermiston is one of the people who saw that the

opportunity for education was not the right choice for her.

"I looked at it this way: you've got 650 people, a lot of them wanting to go to school, some going for their GED or their high school diploma—which I don't have, and I just turned 58. And I look at this. If I wait and go to school and then go out there and find myself a job, I would be working for \$7.50 and I can't make ends meet. And those people out there who are working for \$7.50 an hour can't make ends meet either. I chose to get a job and not worry about my education. I'm not somebody who wants to sit behind a desk all day long and answer a phone and look pretty. I like being out there, I like working with people; I like the potato industry. This is me. I hope I'm able to stick it out until I get ready to retire."

-Barb Martin, Hermiston

Making ends meet becomes an overriding priority for people who have been laid off due to free trade. For those who are able to find a way to survive financially while participating in retraining, the rewards can extend beyond just education into counseling and emotional support.

Peggy and Elton Clark are among the numerous people who saw TAA's benefits and encourage the government not to cut good programs short, but to allow them full time to develop.

Peggy Clark: "The only thing is that if anybody has to go through this, the Transition Center [the TAA center] was the best thing that ever could have happened because it tried to bring a positive to our employees and to the workers. That was the most wonderful thing ever. There was counseling available. There were people who could speak Spanish, that whole concept was a really good thing."

Elton Clark: "If there is any way to get the program extended out for the people who don't have any education..."

Peggy Clark: "Especially when you know your population or employees. You know how long it's going to take to retrain them

to get them to do anything as far as a job to better themselves and support their families. It takes a long time."

-Peggy and Elton Clark, Woodburn

The reality for most displaced workers is that retraining is a huge commitment, it takes a significant amount of time and resources and there is no guarantee of a job or of decent wages when all is said and done.

Quality of Work: The Flight of the Family Wage

Oregonians who lose jobs due to free trade and outsourcing often find that the jobs left available to them pay less and offer a lower quality of workplace.

The disparity between living wage and minimum wage jobs, and those with and without health insurance, is lost in the "job creation" statistics often reported by the state employment department.

Oakley Taylor of Bend speaks to this when she describes her experiences.

"Right now I'm building airplanes at Columbia aircraft for less money than I made 20 years ago. The bonus being is that right now I have health care and dental and vision. When that mill closed [KorPine] I was making almost \$40,000 a year. I raised my two sons on those kind of wages. ... I made \$13,500 last year.

"I don't know what people are going to have left if this continues. It's just a rapid decline, as far as I can see, with the quality of people's lives... I just think we [KorPine employees] made a decent living and I think everyone should make that. Anyone that works hard deserves to make a decent living, deserves to take a vacation two weeks out of every year and not struggle all the time."

-Oakley Taylor, Bend

The difficulty of finding comparable wages to the job that was lost is a consistent theme through all towns and industries.

Jeffrey Stormont, former mill worker and current carpenter, expresses his experience in the plainest way.

"We are expected to go out and get an \$8 an hour job—but I was making \$15 before [the layoff]." Jeffrey Stormont, Bend

The lower wages are especially evident for former union workers who had secured family wages and benefits at their former places of work. Roger Hanson, retired former President of PACE Local 8-406 describes:

Shaken Beliefs in Hermiston

"Each day I drove to the outskirts of town to a small cluster of 1970's style buildings. Here, at the Blue Mountain Community College satellite campus in Hermiston, we would meet during class breaks to talk about life after Simplot.

"I met mostly with women from the plant. Women who had worked at Simplot their entire lives; in between children and husbands and family there was always Simplot.

"I listened to stories of school, jobs and money, but also interweaved were stories of kids' school clothes, divorce, loss of friends, unattainable health care, shock at the lack of corporate humanity and worry about the nation's future. Simplot was not just a job and the closure of that plant seemed to shake everyone's belief in justice and prosperity."

-Kari Koch, Stories Project Coordinator

"Coming out of our mill to a similar job in the non-union facilities and doing basically the same things, you lost \$6-7 an hour just to get a job. You can't afford that when you've based your life on a higher rate of pay." -Roger Hanson, Bend

Mary Riley, a former AgriFrozen worker in Salem who currently owns a restaurant in Brooks, echoes Roger's reaction.

"People tell me, 'Yeah, I can get a job... for minimum wage, \$8 an hour, or even \$10 an hour.' But the mechanics and linemen at AgriFrozen made \$25 or \$30 an hour. They dropped a lot because their life was there. Some of them had been there for 34 years." -Mary Riley, Brooks

Fred Lamb, a former machinist from Freightliner, articulates why these hard earned wages are so vital. There is an element to work and steady income that is about the success of families, communities and entire generations.

"Our kids—my kids, your kids—are not going to do as well as you're doing. The jobs aren't going to be there. And that's too bad because ever since our parents who went through the Great Depression and saw some real hard times, [parents have] always wanted to make it better for their kids. That's happened for several generations. Now that's turning around and going back the other way." -Fred Lamb, Vancouver (WA)

An important distinction between pre-free trade local economies and post-free trade local economies is articulated by Peggy and Elton Clark, husband and wife from Woodburn who both worked at AgriFrozen Foods. As they note, one fatal misconception of the retraining program is that people are in a position to jump into college level courses.

There was a moment in time when workers could secure decent family-wage jobs without degrees. Now, after the layoffs, workers without a formal

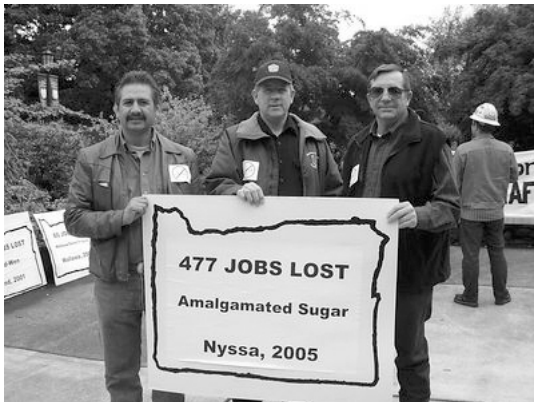
education find their on-the-job seniority means little.

Peggy and Elton describe the situation from the AgriFrozen facility.

Peggy Clark: "There were so many people out there with various different education levels, some with no education whatsoever. They had a big challenge because they had to get English as a Second Language down and/or GED classes. And they had an excellent program through Chemeketa Community College. But they still were looking at minimum wage jobs. A lot of them went to Wal-Mart because that really was all they could do. Or go to work at McDonalds or something."

Elton Clark: "But they had worked their way up to management positions [at AgriFrozen]."

Peggy Clark: "Without any education whatsoever. We had a lady with no education—zero. She was in a supervisor position." –Peggy & Elton Clark, Woodburn



Diego Castellanoz, Dave Philpot and Owen Froeror made the six-hour drive from Nyssa to Portland to speak at a "Vote NO on CAFTA" rally. CAFTA threatened to devastate the sugar industry, which is a mainstay of this Eastern Oregon community.

The Rise of Oregon's Service Economy

Taken together, the individual stories collected by the Stories Project expose a larger process at work in Oregon's economy: the outsourcing of

manufacturing and high tech jobs is fueling the rise in service sector work, often at wages that do not measure up to the work moving overseas.

Elton Clark describes how this played out in Woodburn.

"The employer that came to Woodburn and replaced the same number of employees that AgriFrozen had was Wal-Mart, which pays about \$3/hour less. The average person out there was making \$10/hour and Wal-Mart is paying minimum wage. And no medical." –Elton Clark, Woodburn

The transition from a manufacturing economy to a service economy (and corresponding drop in wages) has been underway since before free trade agreements came into fashion, but NAFTA and subsequent trade policies accelerate the process.

The systematic changes become apparent as the stories of family wage job loss and low-wage replacement are replicated in communities across the state.

In Hermiston, after the closure of the JR Simplot potato processing plant, many interviewees spoke of seeking work at the new Wal-Mart Distribution Center and a Home Depot that was still under construction. In Bend, people who worked in a once-thriving timber industry now can be found as clerks in local hardware and lumber stores.

The ripple affect of a single closure in a community is significant, but often, a closure is connected to an industry that is collectively feeling the pressure of free trade statewide. As Roger Hanson, former worker at the KorPine mill in Bend, says:

**"The overall affect [of the mill closures] in Central Oregon was big. The organized mills were the backbone of the economy."
-Roger Hanson, Bend**

Roger explains what this means for his town.

"Bend is [now] a service-oriented community. The area is expanding, [it's] an explosion—you would think that people could do better. But instead of an explosion in the family wage, in the money that's available to the laboring people, it's an implosion." -Roger Hanson, Bend

The trend toward low-wage, service-oriented jobs is, in fact, a national epidemic. The stories tell this, but statistics also reinforce the workers' experiences. According to the AFL-CIO, nearly one-quarter of the nation's workers labor in jobs that generally pay less than \$8.85 an hour, the federally-determined poverty level.²

Families that once considered themselves middle class feel the squeeze as the wages of available jobs push down towards minimum wage.

A common perception shared through the interviews is that NAFTA looks good on Wall Street, but does not share that prosperity with working families. Outsourcing, as a consequence of NAFTA and free trade, is recognized as factor contributing to the decline of middle class incomes.

Stacy Bruenig lives in Gresham and works for Boeing. She had this to say about outsourcing:

**"So what are they doing to the middle class of America? They are slowly but surely shrinking and enabling the shrinkage of the middle class of America. Free trade doesn't bring the standards of these other countries up. It's just cheaper labor and you see CEOs getting these huge bonuses."
-Stacy Bruenig, Gresham**

Changes in Central Oregon

"On many separate occasions during interviews, people would talk about the incredible change that is happening in Bend at the moment.

"The community is evolving from a working-class, tight knit town to a city of wealth and leisure. KorPine workers focused on the influx of rich people from out of state, coming in to take advantage of the gorgeous location and expedient access to the winter sporting activities.

"On more than a few occasions participants questioned how any of the people moving in could possibly afford the prices of these homes, because no one that was an Oregonian could afford them. Where are these new people working that they can afford a \$400,000 home?

"The Old Mill District is the physical manifestation of this shift. The site of once prosperous and valuable timber mills, the area has now been refurbished into a high-end outdoor shopping experience.

"The buildings are as large as timber mills, but covered in shiny artificial logs contrasted with Nuevo aluminum siding and corrugated tin accents. Willamette Industries and Georgia-Pacific are now REI and Columbia Sportswear, high-waged labor and solid benefits replaced with high-cost jackets and solid sporting equipment.

"The people from KorPine will be the first to say that there is nothing wrong with growth, with wealth or with change. What I heard from the interviews was that, for Bend, there is something significant missing, something intangible that is changing and it's sidelining the people who use to be most important."

-Kari Koch, Stories Project Coordinator

Rural Impacts

For rural communities, the impacts of free trade policies have been most severe in the agriculture and timber industries. Both sectors eliminated thousands of rural jobs across Oregon since NAFTA was implemented in 1994.

AgriFrozen in Woodburn was once the largest food processing facility in the state before closing in 2001. The chain of events at AgriFrozen followed a familiar pattern. A locally-owned business was bought out by a national holding company with no connection or accountability to local growers or the people who worked in the facility. The new management began importing food from Mexico, Israel, Chile and Asia, rather than going to local growers for produce. Finally, the plant was closed, displacing more than 700 permanent employees, many with more than 15 years seniority, as well as an untold number of seasonal workers.

In the interviews with former AgriFrozen employees, many referred to the Oregon berries that were once processed in the plant. Strawberry and raspberry production in Oregon has been decimated by imports, a trend that was facilitated by free trade agreements with Mexico and Chile.

There is an expanding list of crops that Oregon growers can no longer seriously compete in on the international market, which includes cut flowers, mint, asparagus, broccoli, strawberries, raspberries and garlic. Increasingly, markets for onions, sugar beets and potatoes are also threatened by foreign competition.

A Statewide Problem

There is a misperception that trade-related job loss is only a problem for a small handful of Oregonians working in a limited number of industries. Job loss caused by free trade is a problem that has hit and continues to hit all corners of Oregon.

The Stories Project identified and interviewed a wide range of Oregonians who have lost work due to poorly-conceived free trade policies, including:

- High tech workers from Wilsonville;
- Sugar beet growers from Ontario;
- Forest product workers from Bend and Coos Bay;
- Truck manufacturing workers from Portland;
- Small business owners from Glide;
- Food processing plant workers from Hermiston;
- Writers from Beaverton;
- And many others.

Trade agreements promise access to new markets for Oregon agricultural products. This is a top priority for marketers and grower associations. But it is highly doubtful that people living in many poverty-stricken countries that have trade deals with the U.S., such as Honduras and the Dominican Republic, can afford to buy Oregon produce at U.S. prices.

A concern of equal importance is the failure of trade deals to set a level playing field for production. While growers in Oregon are subject to strict environmental reporting standards and

minimum wage laws, trade agreements do not enforce parallel standards abroad.

The timber and wood products industry is another pillar of Oregon's rural economy that is being eroded by free trade. As in the story of AgriFrozen, corporate consolidation in the timber industry has created international giants such as Weyerhaeuser with holdings worldwide. More applications for trade adjustment assistance on the U.S. Department of Labor list of trade-related layoffs in Oregon come from the wood products industry than any other sector.

Multinational timber companies are able to move production across international borders to exploit government subsidies and weaker labor standards. Paper factories of the Northwest are being shut down, dismantled and reassembled in China to resume production and export paper back into the U.S. market. This is the experience of the factory formerly located in North Bend, now a shell of its previous self.

Free trade ducks the question of how to enforce standards across borders to allow international competition without production racing to the nations with the lowest possible environmental and labor standards. Oregon's rural workers recognize this policymaking failure as much as anyone.

Even call centers, which were a booming industry in Oregon's smaller rural communities, are increasingly susceptible to outsourcing. The closure of Sykes Call Centers in Milton-Freewater and Klamath Falls in 2004 drew attention to the problem in Oregon.

Small towns lose after gambling on Sykes jobs

By Scott Barancik, Staff Writer
St. Petersburg Times
March 27, 2004

"Since 2002, Sykes Enterprises has announced plans to close call centers in 10 small U.S. towns amid a rapid overseas expansion.

"One of those communities, a town in the mountains of northeastern Oregon, is publicly begging the Tampa company for mercy...

"Like many agricultural and mining communities desperate for even low-paying jobs, Milton-Freewater and state officials took a risk in 1998 and signed a multimillion-dollar incentive pact with Sykes, which handles technical and support calls for clients...

"Assistant City Manager Linda Hall said nothing about the project was easy, including getting water and sewer services to the soon-to-be-built facility...

"Hall estimates Sykes employed as many as 500 customer service staff in the ensuing years. What the company apparently didn't anticipate was the rapid decline of PC manufacturers and the U.S. economy in general.

"Nor did Sykes guess that competition, increasingly thin profits and technological improvements would push it to begin moving its operations to places such as Costa Rica, the Philippines and India, where highly educated, English-speaking workers will take calls for as little as \$1 an hour...

"Milton-Freewater Mayor Lewis Key learned earlier this month that Sykes would close the local call center and lay off its 264 remaining workers May 2. The company recently said it expects to close still more of its 10 remaining U.S. call centers this year."

Unnecessary Outsourcing

While free trade policies enable outsourcing, many interviewees fundamentally question the idea that outsourcing of Oregon's family-wage jobs is inevitable.

The corporate decision to outsource jobs is rarely based on the ability of Oregon manufacturers to compete on the international market. Instead, the decision is based on the desires of shareholders. As a result, the plants being closed due to outsourcing are often profitable, fully-competitive facilities—not failing or bankrupt enterprises.

ORFTC found multiple cases of corporations outsourcing profitable manufacturing plants: the Weyerhaeuser paper mill in Coos Bay, the Freightliner parts plant in Portland, the AgriFrozen food processor in Woodburn and the list goes on.

As Diego Castellanoz of Nyssa puts it:

"I can understand if your company is just floundering, but you look at some of these companies and they're down 6% this quarter, but last quarter they made \$43 million and this year they only made \$38 million. I'm not saying that in a bad or chastising way, but if you run to another country that pays a lot less to give them work so your profit margin can go up for the board of directors and the CEOs, there's not very much logic in there to me. Maybe that's because I'm in jeopardy of losing what little I got."

-Diego Castellanoz, Nyssa

Corporate consolidation and buy-outs have been going on for the past twenty years in Oregon. This is especially apparent in accounts of textiles, food processing and wood products industries. As corporations buy out local facilities, decisions on outsourcing are made in corporate headquarters that are far removed from the local level.

Short-term gains in stock price come at a steep price for communities in Oregon. It raises questions of what our priorities are as a nation. Is the U.S. economy actually stronger for outsourcing jobs? Is a short-term bump in quarterly

earnings more important than the stable employment and local economies that are sacrificed in the process?

Randy Sanne, who lost his job when Weyerhaeuser closed its Springfield facility and then again two years later when Weyerhaeuser closed a profitable mill in North Bend, observes:

"We used to be a nation that makes things. Now we just buy and sell things made overseas." -Randy Sanne, North Bend

White-collar workers are also feeling the pinch of outsourcing and questioning its wisdom in the long-term. Diane Newell of InFocus in Wilsonville had this to say:

"Our engineers don't like it. We're basically teaching other people how to do our jobs and make our products."
- Diane Newell, Portland

For Oregon grower Owen Froerer in Nyssa, the connections between the corporate approach to outsourcing and the free trade agenda are clear.

"Some of the politicians want to cater to the big corporations but they are just wiping out the farmers of this nation. We can't just be a consuming nation, at some point we have to produce a product to sell. I told the representatives, 'This economic direction has got to change. Our policies can't keep going like this. We can't survive.' We were fighting against CAFTA. These trade agreements will be devastating to the nation as a whole."
-Owen Froerer, Nyssa

Challenging Outsourcing

"If the government is going to sign free trade acts they need to come up with a better plan to protect the American worker." -Joe Hamblin, Bend

The recognition that outsourcing is a corporate decision, not an inevitable force of globalization, opens the possibility of challenging decision-

Reverse Diversification in Salem

“The area around Oregon’s state capitol, Salem, is a part of the state hit especially hard hit by free trade and job loss in the last few years.

“Its food-processing plants once made jelly out of Oregon strawberries and frozen florets out of local broccoli. Its high-tech manufacturers and mini-Silicon Valley made microchips... Its wood products mills once created building and packing materials... All of these industries suffered closures and layoffs due to foreign competition.

“Rather than fostering a vibrant economy, free trade cut jobs across all of Salem’s core industries. That contradicts the argument of pro-NAFTA advocates that free trade forces economic diversification—no more one-factory towns. The stories of people who lost jobs in Salem tells a different story. One of the only large-scale employers paying respectable wages in the area is the State.”

-Kari Koch, Stories Project Coordinator

makers who chose outsourcing over local investment.

“Free trade is like letting somebody come in your house and take everything you own. What is the difference there from the worker’s point of view? For the Corning executives and the company that sold out to China, they’ll set up their plant and make that stuff for one-tenth of what they are here. They don’t care about us. They’re not American companies anymore. This multinational stuff—I don’t go for it. I’m for the old school. I’m a patriot. I love this country.” -Steve Gern, Glide

Trade policies embrace and encourage corporate decisions to outsource U.S. jobs. Elected officials who support NAFTA-style trade agreements should

be held accountable for their consequences.

In the political arena, leadership in both the Democratic and Republican Parties have pushed free trade policies without evaluating their impacts, so real debate and public dialogue is missing even as the number of jobs lost continues to grow with each passing year.

Many people interviewed by the Stories Project believe that Congressional representatives who support Free Trade are out of touch with their constituents.

“Maybe elected leaders need to go back to the original decisions about free trade and figure out where they went wrong, and then restart to make decisions that are more logical. Then come and talk to us and tell us this trade agreement is a good deal. I’ll ask you if it is a good deal when I lose my job, when I cant send my kids to college, when I might lose my house. NAFTA and CAFTA don’t sound like good deals to me.” -Diego Castellanoz, Nyssa

Findings

Working families across the state have witnessed the affects of misguided trade policies.

NAFTA-style trade policies are a root cause for approximately 68,000 jobs lost in Oregon since 1994. In addition to plant closures and layoffs, Oregon loses secondary jobs, tax base and property values.

The jobs being lost offered more than a paycheck. They provided a sense of family and community.

As Oregon employers outsource family-wage manufacturing jobs, local economies are shifting to low-paid service sector work with fewer opportunities to advance to higher-paid positions.

NAFTA-style trade policy facilitates the buyout and outsourcing of jobs by corporate conglomerates even at Oregon facilities that are profitable and competitive.

Policy Prescriptions on International Trade

1. Engage in long-term trade relations to build strong trade partners instead of the bulk approach to trade deals.

While the European Economic Union gradually integrates regional economies into a single trade block, the U.S. has pursued a frantic approach to trade—signing as many trade deals as possible without thought to long-term strategic partnerships.

It is time to reevaluate our current trade relationships, starting with NAFTA, to look for policies that further integrate our regional economy in ways that distribute more widely the benefits of cross-border commerce and investment.

The U.S. Trade Representative currently seeks trade deals with countries that are unfit to engage in long-term trade relationships. Examples include the recent trade agreement with Oman, a nation that forbid independent unions by royal decree in 2003, and the proposed agreement with Colombia, a country

with the worst human rights record in the Western Hemisphere.

In other instances, the U.S. signs agreements with countries like Honduras or the Dominican Republic where the majority of the population cannot afford Oregon's high quality exports. Signing trade deals without the willingness to engage in long-term development defeats the purpose of expanding trade relations.

"I'm thinking of Maytag—went to Mexico. That's a classic example because you've got people who are now down in Mexico building refrigerators or whatever it is but they can't afford to buy them. And if those people at Maytag that would have built those refrigerators—if they don't have jobs now or something equivalent to what they were making, who's going to buy them?"
-Fred Lamb, Vancouver (WA)

2. Set a level playing field for trade with consistent standards across borders for labor, health and the environment.

Trade policy opens important opportunities to set minimum standards that raise the standard of living on both sides of the border.

"Basically the whole idea behind the free trade, and this I think was the selling point, was to bring other countries up to our standards. But what happened was it is lowering our quality of life down to theirs, because you're outsourcing all of these jobs. Why are they going to pay American labor a decent wage when they can export their jobs overseas?" -Oakley Taylor, Bend

U.S. consumers want to know that imported food meets our standards of pesticide use just as much as farm laborers abroad want to be protected from toxic chemicals that are banned in the U.S.

The absence of meaningful, enforceable labor, health and environmental standards in trade policy sets up a “race to the bottom.” Nations compete to attract investment by failing to enforce standards that might raise the cost of doing business, usually at the expense of workers’ rights or health.

Immigration

The awareness of trade’s negative impacts on people in this country is coupled with the accurate perception that NAFTA’s economic benefits are not widely shared by working people in Mexico or other trade partner nations that have developing economies:

“If NAFTA is working so well for people in Mexico, why are immigrants flooding across the border?”
-Larry Wilhite, Coos Bay

“Free Trade isn’t about improving the quality of life for any workers; it’s about companies’ profit margins increasing. Right now, even for minimum wage or less Latinos will risk everything to try to come over here. That is living proof that these free trade policies are not working in Mexico either.”
-Diego Castellanoz, Nyssa

“China is putting the big kibosh on Mexico. People are moving their operations out of Mexico and moving to China. Super. Mexico is not all that cheap anymore.” -Steve Gern, Glide

3. Guarantee that labor and environmental provisions of trade agreements have the same enforcement as other sections such as intellectual property rights.

In the original version of NAFTA, labor and environmental considerations were added as an afterthought and, even then, not included in the text of the agreement. This sorry precedent has continued in subsequent trade deals where labor and environmental concerns are held to a lesser standard of enforcement.

In the U.S.-Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), disputes over copyright infringement can be challenged through a dispute resolution process and settled through retaliatory tariffs and quotas that cost the offending country millions of dollars. Meanwhile, labor and environmental concerns are to be settled through a protracted process of hearings that result in a token fines of the government.

“The way we understood NAFTA, it was suppose to be free trade between the two countries, an equal partnership. As long as it is fair trade, free trade is good. For some reason NAFTA did not turn out to be a fair trade program. I think any trade agreement, from the perspective of any grower, needs to be a fair program for everyone involved. It needs to create a level operating field or it is not going to work for anyone.”
-Daniel Chin, Merrill

A simple test for fairness of future trade agreements is to see if those trade deals afford equal enforcement to labor, health and environmental standards as the enforcement granted to intellectual property rights.

4. Bring trade policy in line with sound economic planning for priority areas of the national economy.

Priorities for the U.S. should include ensuring that family farms and ranches are a component of domestic food security, and securing employment opportunities in small towns and rural communities.

Neither issue area is suited to a free trade policy prescription of blindly dropping all trade barriers and hoping for the best. Setting priorities to preserve rural jobs and food security can shape forward-thinking trade policy that feeds back to

influence domestic policies in both arenas.

Interview Methodology

Guiding Principles

In a state of 3 million people where approximately 68,000 people have been directly affected by free trade, how do you decide whose doors to knock on first?

The Oregon Fair Trade Campaign's Stories Project set out to interview Oregonians affected by free trade by following a basic plan of action. We worked within these goals in mind:

- 1. Collect 100 interviews from workers, farmers and small business owners who have lost part or all of their livelihoods due to free trade agreements.**
- 2. Prioritize geographical diversity with a focus on communities outside of Portland.**
- 3. Focus on workers in the industries most heavily affected by free trade in Oregon.**
- 4. Work in the communities that were most reliant on the impacted industries.**
- 5. Prioritize communities with recent plant shutdowns and/or communities where the AFL-CIO set up peer counselors and guided retraining through the TAA program.**

Strategic Locations

Interviews for this project took place in twenty communities across the state, but centered around nine central locations.

Bend

KorPine particleboard mill, a division of Weyerhaeuser Industries, closed in 2002 due to cheap imports of wood from Canada, laying off almost 200 people. The plant closure is indicative of a larger trend of plant closures in one of Oregon's primary industries: wood products. Workers were members of Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy workers (PACE) Local 8-406. Located as the hub of Central Oregon, Bend is in Rep. Greg Walden's district.

Coos Bay/North Bend

In 2003, Weyerhaeuser closed a facility on the coast in North Bend that produced corrugated cardboard. More than 150 workers were displaced in the plant closure. The Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers Local 1000 represented workers in the plant, which was located in Rep. Peter DeFazio's district.

Hermiston

The J.R. Simplot potato processing plant closed and moved over the border into Canada. In a town of 13,000, the plant directly eliminated 719 people in 2004. Located on the eastern stretch of I-84, a short drive from the Washington border, Umatilla County is dominated by agriculture, food processing and a chemical weapons incinerating facility. Hermiston is in Rep. Greg Walden's district. This facility was non-union.

Klamath Falls

Klamath Falls, located in the far southern reaches of the state, is notably different from the other location choices. Unlike the other areas, our time in Klamath Falls was limited to one week. We chose to go there because of the opportunity to connect with growers and timber workers. The distinction between this location and others is that we did not go to K-Falls with the intention of finding people who had worked at a specific facility.

Nyssa

The Amalgamated Sugar processing plant in Nyssa closed due to increased imports of sugar. In a town of just over 3,000, the plant directly eliminated more than 400 jobs in 2005. Located on Oregon's eastern border with Idaho, Malheur County is one of the far-reaching rural counties represented by Rep. Greg Walden. Workers at Amalgamated were members of the Bakers, Confectioners, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers (BCTGM) Union Local 290G.

Portland

In 2001, Freightliner LLC, a manufacturer of trucks and large commercial vehicles, decided to close its Portland parts plant in favor of sourcing parts abroad; this resulted in the laying off of 770 workers. Workers were members of International Association of Machinists Local 1005. The plant was on Swan Island in North Portland, in the heart of Rep. Earl Blumenauer's district.

Roseburg

Deep in timber country, Roseburg was where we connected with our first interviewee, a small business owner named Steve Gern. We met Steve by chance at another event months earlier. While we would never assert that Steve represents the entire Roseburg community, Steve's experiences are indicative of small business owners' experiences in many communities across the state. Roseburg, an area

rich in natural resources, once had a bustling, high-paying industrial base. It is located close to ports, rivers and a major interstate, but is far enough outside of any metropolises to be well defined as "rural." Small business owners once thrived along with the community as a whole, but they are now struggling with outsourcing and cheap imports the way that major industries of Roseburg struggle with outsourcing and cheap imports. Roseburg is in Rep. Peter DeFazio's district.

Salem/Woodburn

AgriFrozen food processing plant had multiple facilities in both Salem and 30 minutes away in Woodburn. All facilities closed in 2001 due to foreign competition, laying off 453 workers. AgriFrozen changed hands many times over the years, its last owners buying it out only a few months before the closure. The facility processed fruits and vegetables. Whereas, historically, most of their products came from local growers in the Willamette Valley, in its last years of operation, the company began importing produce from Mexico, Israel, Asia and South America. Salem and Woodburn are located in Rep. Darlene Hooley's district. Workers were members of Teamsters Local 670.

Wilsonville

InFocus, an Oregon technology powerhouse, was praised by President Bush during his visit to Portland in 2004 as a vibrantly American company that kept all manufacturing in-house. Months later, the manufacturing of their in-demand, top-of-the-line digital projectors moved to Malaysia. Soon after, the engineering and development components—the white-collar tech workers—saw their jobs go to Southeast Asia with the manufacturing facility. InFocus is particularly interesting because it represents the largest number of white-collar, advanced-education jobs in the Stories Project. Many InFocus workers expressed an overriding sense of entitlement and disbelief that this could have happened to them. InFocus workers were non-union and worked in Rep. Earl Blumenauer's district.

Finding the Interviewees

We tracked down Oregonians who had lost their jobs due to free trade in a variety of ways, including:

- Partnering up with local organizations and unions who have existing networks in communities and were most likely around or,

in the case of unions, involved with the facility when it laid off.

- Researching newspaper articles about the closure of a facility.
- Holding informational forums on trade and outsourcing.

Setting Up the Interviews; Explaining the Purpose

After tracking down names and contact information of potential interviewees, our approach was to call them up, tell them about the project and ask if they would like to share their story.

The most important component to make clear was that this is not an academic exercise. ORFTC is a group that is organizing to stop reckless free trade agreements; people the Stories Project interviews are the ones who hold the key to this fight: the stories.

Conducting Interviews

Interviews followed a set of questions. Where did you work? For how long? Was foreign trade and competition a factor in you losing your job? If you had an opportunity to talk to your Congressional representative, what would you say? The best interviews were ones that followed the questions loosely, but had a more genuine conversation about life, family, community and politics.



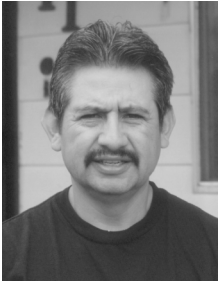


Intentions






The primary objective for this project is to build a network of people who will hold elected officials accountable for jobs sacrificed to misguided trade policies. Interviews served as a way of sharing important stories of how trade-related job loss is reshaping local economies statewide.






While one goal of the project was to gather information to have first-hand accounts of the impact of free trade on working Oregonians, ORFTC's intention is to provide opportunities for decision makers to hear directly from constituents who lost jobs due to NAFTA-style trade agreements. ORFTC hopes to walk away from each community with a core of people who willing to join the campaign for fair trade.









Profiles of Stories Project participants quoted within this report:

(For more please see our website at www.citizenstrade.org/interviews/)

	<p>Steve Bradbury Bend, OR Former worker at KorPine mill</p>
	<p>Stacy Breunig Gresham, OR Boeing, Quality Assurance Inspector Affiliations: Machinists [IAM] Local 63, President, Chief Shop Steward</p>
	<p>Diego Castellanoz Nyssa, OR Supervisor, Amalgamated Sugar Processing Plant, Employee for 28 years Affiliations: City Councilor, School Board Member, Former Mayor</p>
	<p>Daniel Chin Merrill, OR Potato Farmer in the Klamath Basin, Wong's Spuds Affiliations: multiple local, state and national potato associations</p>
	<p>Elton Clark Woodburn, OR Retired from AgriFrozen Foods Former Refrigerator Technician</p>

	<p>Peggy Clark Woodburn, OR Former Quality Control Supervisor at AgriFrozen, currently works for State of Oregon Affiliations: Member SEIU Local 503</p>
	<p>Don Eder Salem, OR Former worker at AgriFrozen Foods, currently employed at Neilson Sheet Metal, also threatened by free trade Affiliations: Sheet Metal Workers Union Local 16</p>
	<p>Owen Froerer Nyssa, OR Farmer/Grower Mint, sugar beets, asparagus, potatoes, other</p>
	<p>Steve Gern Glide, OR Sew & Sew, Business Owner/Entrepreneur</p>
	<p>Joe Hamblin Klamath Falls, OR Former worker at Timber Mill</p>
	<p>Roger Hanson Bend, OR Former worker at KorPine particleboard mill Affiliations: Former President of PACE [Paper Allied Chemical and Energy Workers Union] Local 8-406</p>

	<p>Benjamin Joy Portland, OR Former Product Developer at InFocus Company</p>
	<p>Angie Kile Hermiston, OR Former quality control at J.R. Simplot</p>
	<p>Fred Lamb Vancouver, WA Retired machinist, Frieghtliner Parts Plant Affiliations: Machinists Union [IAM] Local 1005, President of Retiree Association</p>
	<p>Evelyn Marshall Bend, OR Former worker at KorPine mill Currently works for State of Oregon, DHS. Affiliations: Service Employees International Union [SEIU] Local 503, Shop Steward.</p>
	<p>Barb Martin Hermiston, OR Former worker at JR Simplot Potato Processing Plant</p>
	<p>Joan Miller Portland, OR Former Freightliner, Reynolds Aluminum Local 1005, IAM Machinists</p>
	<p>Diane Newell Beaverton, OR Technical Writer at InFocus</p>

	<p>Steve Nitchke North Bend, OR Former worker at Weyerhaeuser President AWPPW Local 1000</p>
	<p>Mary Riley Brooks, OR Former quality control worker at AgriFrozen Currently a small business owner</p>
	<p>Randy Sanne North Bend, OR Former worker for Weyerhaeuser AWPPW, Local 1000</p>
	<p>Jeffrey Stormont Bend, OR Former worker at KorPine Currently a carpenter</p>
	<p>Oakley Taylor Bend, OR Former worker at KorPine Currently works at Columbia AirCraft Affiliations: Former President of Central Oregon Central Labor Council</p>
	<p>Domingo Vargas Hermiston, OR Instructor for laid-off J.R. Simplot workers</p>
	<p>Gary Wampole Willamina, OR Former worker at AgriFrozen Foods Currently works as a millwright at a lumber mill</p>
	<p>Larry Wilhite North Bend, OR Former worker at Weyerhaeuser AWPPPW Local 1000</p>

Notes:

¹ <http://www.epi.org/content.cfm?id=1561>

² <http://www.aflcio.org/issues/jobseconomy/exportingamerica/>



Authors:

Michael Geoghegan is former Director of the Oregon Fair Trade Campaign and founded the Oregon Stories Project in 2004. His background is in labor organizing and campaigns for corporate accountability. He resides in Portland.

Kari Koch is the Program Coordinator for the Oregon Fair Trade Campaign. She has been working toward fair trade and doing rural organizing for two years. Kari comes from a labor background, organizing with SEIU. Originally from rural Oklahoma, she now lives in Portland.

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OREGON FAIR TRADE CAMPAIGN

OR-FTC