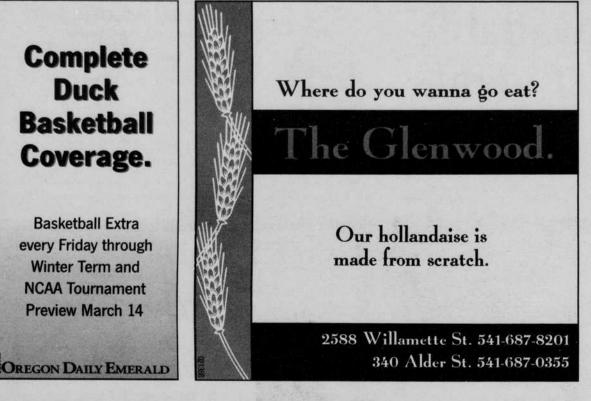
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IN BRIEF

Bush names Negroponte to national intelligence post

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President Bush named John Negroponte, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, as the government's first national intelligence director Thursday, turning to a veteran diplomat to revive a spy community besieged by criticism after the Sept. 11 attacks.

Ending a nine-week search, Bush chose Negroponte, who has been in Iraq for less than a year, for the difficult job of implementing the most sweeping intelligence overhaul in 50 years.

Negroponte, 65, is tasked with bringing together 15 highly competitive spy agencies and learning to work with the combative Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, the new CIA Director Porter Goss and other intelligence leaders. He'll oversee a covert intelligence budget estimated at \$40 billion.

Negroponte, a former ambassador to the United Nations and a number of countries, called the job his "most challenging assignment" in more than 40 years of government work.

-The Associated Press

LTD: Changes are expected on final labor contract offer

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actions, Hunt said, and if things aren't resolved, "they're going to see one, there's going to be a strike."

One of the union's many concerns with the LTD management is its use of a large amount of funds for expensive capital projects that unions representatives say do not benefit the community the way preserving bus service and taking care of drivers do.

"I think the public should be outraged by what's going on," Hunt said, adding that union members don't understand "how you can spend money on one side and claim poverty on another side."

Much of the money being spent on capital projects comes through grant funds, which can only be used for designated projects, but Hunt said LTD has a history of moving money that could be made public should an outside expert be allowed to review the district's funding levels.

"We feel this group will be able to show that even with (capital funds), there is money out there to support the 6 percent increase," Hunt said.

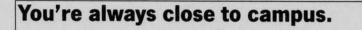
The 6 percent increase refers to the wage and benefits increases LTD has given the union in the last two contract offers. With this contract offer, LTD has said it wants to keep the increase around 4 percent, but Vobora said recent negotiations have pushed the figure up closer to 5 percent.

"We think we've addressed the employees that we've heard and made changes," Vobora said. "The 4 percent comes from a kind of longterm perspective of trying to try to control all personnel expenses at a rate that is equal to what your main revenue source is."

Vobora said changes should be expected to the final contract offer and added that certain aspects of the offer could be remedied retroactively if necessary.

The Feb. 25 negotiation session will be the first since LTD implemented its final contract offer on Feb. 1.

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