

IN BRIEF

Human-rights council names new commissioners

The Eugene Human Rights Commission will welcome four new members and discuss the city council homelessness strategy at its monthly meeting tonight.

James Garcia, Rebecca Flynn, Annette Leonard and David Lottier will all be attending their first meeting as commissioners after being appointed by the city council.

The new commissioners will all have time to introduce themselves to the commission at the beginning of the meeting.

In February 2005, the city council identified eight priority issues, one of which was developing a plan to help the city's homeless. Angel Jones, Library Recreation and Cultural Services Executive Director, will give an update on the city council's efforts.

The Commission will pay special attention to problems the homeless have had gaining access to the Eugene Public Library.

Greg Rikhoof of the Eugene Human Rights Program will give an update on the progress in adding the term "gender identity" to the city's antidiscrimination ordinance. The addition would protect transgender people from discrimination in housing, employment and other areas.

The commission must approve language to send to the city council for approval.

"The commission and community members are trying to come to an agreement on code language that will work for as many people as possible" said Karen Hyatt of the Human Rights Program.

The meeting will be tonight at 6 p.m. in the McNutt Room at the Eugene City Hall at 777 Pearl St.

—Chris Hagan

Alito boasted about his work against abortion

WASHINGTON — Supreme Court nominee Samuel Alito boasted about his work, arguing that "the Constitution does not protect a right to an abortion" while trying to become a deputy assistant attorney general in the Reagan administration, according to documents released Monday.

Alito, a federal appellate judge nominated by President Bush to the nation's highest court, was a young lawyer working for the solicitor general's office in 1985 when he applied for the position.

As part of his application, Alito said his work had included helping "to advance legal positions in which I personally believe very strongly."

"I am particularly proud of my contributions in recent cases in which the government argued that racial and ethnic quotas should not be allowed and that the Constitution does not protect a right to an abortion," he wrote.

U.S.-led operation kills 50 insurgents in attack

BAGHDAD, Iraq — U.S. and Iraqi troops launched a fresh attack Monday against an insurgent stronghold near the Syrian border despite calls by Sunni Arab leaders to halt such operations to encourage a big turnout in next month's election. The U.S. command said about 50 insurgents were killed.

Two U.S. Marines were killed and at least seven were wounded in the fighting in the border town of Obeidi, according to a New York Times reporter is embedded with the Marines. A Marine spokesman told The Associated Press that he cannot report casualties until 24 hours after they occur.

In Baghdad, a car bomb exploded near the main gate to the heavily guarded Green Zone, killing two South Africans and wounding three others. The victims worked for State Department security contractor DynCorp International, the U.S. Embassy said.

—The Associated Press

Oregon economy

Oregon's unemployment lowest since April 2001

BY WILLIAM MCCALL
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PORTLAND — The state's economy is showing more signs of a strong recovery and job growth after unemployment fell to its lowest level in more than four years in October.

Gov. Ted Kulongoski made a special appearance Monday at the monthly Oregon Employment Department briefing to announce the statewide jobless rate fell to 6 percent for the first time since April 2001.

He noted the state economy has the sixth-fastest growth rate in the nation, with a steady expansion over the past two years.

"We've created more than 81,000 jobs in this state" since January 2003, the Democratic governor said. "And it's regional growth, not just in a particular area."

Art Ayre, the state's chief labor economist, said the Oregon economy has grown at a steady 3 percent rate for nearly two years, more than double the average 1.4 percent growth rate nationally.

Private companies performed even better than the slower public sector, growing 3.6 percent in Oregon compared to 1.5 percent nationally over the past 12 months, Ayre said.

The state had recovered the 64,000 jobs it lost in the recession by last January and has gained another 40,400 since January, he said.

Nationally, the unemployment rate was essentially unchanged at 5 percent in October, about the same as the previous five months.

Oregon had suffered the highest jobless rate in the nation for most of the recession but has been making

up ground in the last year. The one-point difference between the Oregon unemployment rate in October and the national rate was the smallest since January 2001, Ayre said.

Some Oregonians who were at the Employment Department during the announcement said they had mixed feelings about the improvement.

William Hones, 50, said he came from Britain when he was 22 and hitchhiked across the United States to find a job with a cruise ship line. He has never had trouble finding a job, even during the recession, including his current job as a building maintenance worker, he said.

"There's no reason not to work in this country," Hones said. "There should be no reason you can't find a job."

His feelings were echoed by Lucia Marie DelosantosCoy, 28, who has been working part-time for a temporary help service.

"I just applied for unemployment for the first time," DelosantosCoy said.

"Yeah, there are more jobs out there, but it's an issue of quality versus quantity," she said. "There aren't enough quality jobs."

Kulongoski urged stronger support for education, including vocational programs for skilled workers. As an example, he noted the number of skilled millwrights is declining in Oregon as many approach retirement age.

"It will end up hurting our economy over the long run if we don't invest in those skills," Kulongoski said. "They're good jobs. You can have all the engineers and all the scientists

you want. But someone has to pick up the tools and build the buildings and the roads and the bridges."

In October, most of the major industries in Oregon performed slightly better than their normal seasonal trend. The gains were led by trade, transportation and utilities with 3,000 more jobs than the typical seasonal increase for that sector.

The end of a one-month strike by Boeing Co. employees boosted October numbers by 900 jobs in the aerospace industry in Oregon.

Retail started its seasonal hiring with a gain of 4,400 jobs, which Ayre said "is a pretty strong start to the holiday hiring season."

Building material and garden supply stores added 500 jobs and is up 1,500 jobs, or 10.3 percent, in the past 12 months. The biggest loser for the month was leisure and hospitality, which declined by 6,000 in October.

Construction employment dropped only 200 jobs in October, when a loss of 500 is normal for the time of year. Seasonally adjusted employment in construction reached 93,300 in October — gaining more than 11 percent with 9,300 jobs added over a 12-month period.

Manufacturing performed in line with normal trends in October, cutting 100 jobs when a drop of 400 is expected for the time of year.

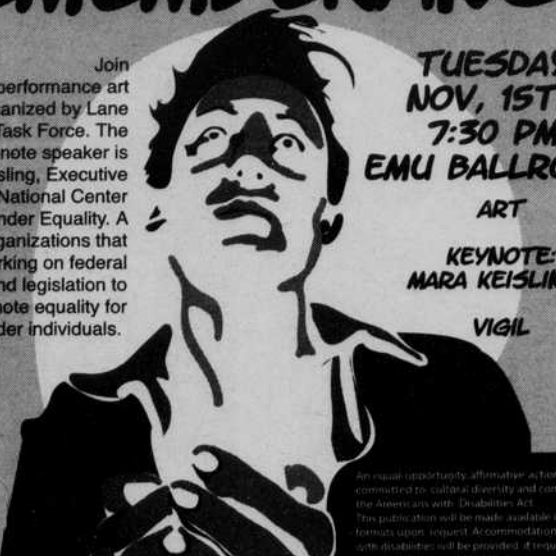
The jobless rate is down more than a full point from last October, when it stood at 7.3 percent. For the month, 100,657 Oregonians were unemployed, the lowest level since December 2000 and nearly 19 percent lower than the 124,056 without jobs in October 2004.



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TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Join us for a performance art piece organized by Lane Gender Task Force. The events Key-note speaker is Mara Keisling, Executive Director of National Center for Transgender Equality. A national organizations that is working on federal issues and legislation to promote equality for transgender individuals.

TUESDAY NOV. 15TH 7:30 PM
EMU BALLROOM
ART
KEYNOTE: MARA KEISLING
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