

SERVING

Burlingame • Capitol Hill
• Garden Home • Glen
Cullen • Hillsdale
• South Portland
• Multnomah Village
• Raleigh Hills • Vermont
Hills • West Portland

The Southwest Portland Post

Southwest Portland's Independent Neighborhood Newspaper

INSIDE:

Read Across America
brings Gov. Kitzhaber
to Maplewood School
– Page 8

Volume No. 19, Issue No. 6

www.swportlandpost.com

Portland, Oregon

Complimentary

April 2011

Somali American culture and community celebrated at Multnomah Arts Center

By Polina Olsen
The Southwest Portland Post

Portlanders from around the world packed the Multnomah Arts Center auditorium on March 25 as they celebrated Somali American culture and community.



Traditional Somali food, beautiful flowing robes, and swinging African music formed the backdrop to the art exhibit developed by Colored Pencils Art and Culture Night and the Somali American Council of Oregon.

Colored Pencils, an organization made up of a myriad of ethnicities, lifestyles and generations, hosts an art exhibit in different Portland locations each month.

Their website (www.coloredpencil-art.com/) explains: "To date, artists representing 32 mainstream, ethnic minority, and newcomer communities, including recently resettled Iraqi singers, musicians, and poets, have contributed to our broad shouldered and big hearted vision of New Portland."

Tonight, Somali artist Said Amir watched from the front row. Before coming to the United States in 1997, he painted portraits on commission.

Here, hard work got in the way of art. His wife and children were in Yemen. Now with the family together and things looking brighter, he hopes to continue with his chosen profession.

Musee Oloi from the SACOO greeted the crowd and started the chain of musicians and speakers. Oloi introduced Uma Abdullahi, a Madison High School senior and newly crowned Rose Festival Princess.

Abdullahi's parents Lul Sharif Ibrahim and Isgou Mohamed brought their family to the United States when she was three years old. "I want to repre-



Anisa Omar (in green) and Rahma Omar (in blue) were among the Somali Americans at the Multnomah Arts Center celebration. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

sent all those people who are under-represented, people who don't have a voice, people like me," she said. "It doesn't matter where you come from.

It matters where you're going."

For more information about the Somali American Council of Oregon visit <http://sacoo.org/>.

South Waterfront transportation project receives \$23 million federal grant

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood last month participated in the groundbreaking for the Southwest Moody Project, a reconfiguration of that street and its streetcar line, made possible by a federal stimulus grant he had approved.

At the same ceremony, LaHood announced the award of two other federal grants for transit improvements.

The Moody Project will reconfigure Southwest Moody Avenue between River Parkway and Gibbs Street. It will extend Southwest Bond Avenue to the north, and allow the Portland Streetcar to travel on two tracks rather than one through this part of town.

Finally, it will raise the street 14 feet to allow for a connection to the pending Portland to Milwaukie Light Rail Proj-

ect and its transit bridge. The project was made possible by a \$23 million federal TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant.

LaHood and Mayor Sam Adams also announced the awarding of two other federal Stimulus grants to TriMet. One, for \$6 million, will pay for the purchase of 17 new fuel-efficient buses. Another, for \$4 million, will pay for 20 on-board energy storage units for 20 light rail vehicles.

Adams noted that the funds had been "reprogrammed" from other projects deemed less critical. "Thank you for being here, and for spending some time and money," he told LaHood at the ceremony at Moody and River Parkway.

Thanks to the project, Adams said, the former industrial property to the south will soon be "unrecognizable." A new building for the Oregon Health and Sciences University will soon rise there, the first part of a planned 19-acre



U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood (right) participates in a press conference at the groundbreaking of the Moody Avenue Project in South Waterfront. (Post photo by Lee Perlman)

campus, on "the largest piece of undeveloped land left in the Central City," Adams said.

According to Adams, the project will be served by "all modes of transportation – nine, counting kayaks. No matter where you live, this will benefit you in a number of ways."

Except for U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, Oregon's entire congressional delegation attended the event. U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley noted that the land, together with the Portland State University and Oregon Museum of Science and Industry campuses, is "fittingly called the Innovation Quarter. We're particularly fortunate to have this piece of the puzzle fall into place."

Merkeley added, "Oregon couldn't have a better benefactor than Ray La-

Hood." LaHood, in his turn, said Oregon is "blessed with a congressional delegation that works extremely hard. The TIGER grant wouldn't have happened without them."

LaHood added, "Transportation isn't an end in itself; it's a means to an end. It affects the way we live our lives and fulfill our dreams." Less time spent in traffic congestion "means less time on the road, more time with our families. In order to compete, we have to outwork and out-innovate the rest of the world. The president's vision is coming into life right here in Portland."

Congressman Earl Blumenauer recalled LaHood from his days as an Illinois congressman and said, "I was delighted when he was appointed Sec- (Continued on Page 7)

Don't forget to renew your subscription. Form on Page 2.

The Southwest Portland Post
4207 SE Woodstock Blvd #509
Portland, OR 97206