

**KOTEK, from page 4**

what's going on. And everything is at a standstill. And we don't have a way to force them to come to the table, and that's why you're seeing no one participating in mediation.

**J.Z.:** *The legislature bent over backward for Nike, what is it doing for the rest of the workforce to improve our unemployment in this state, and identify opportunities for the unemployable.*

**T.K.:** Keeping Nike in Oregon and having them expand is going to be good. It's going to create jobs and more jobs in all the services that go into supporting Nike. I didn't like the process, but it wasn't enough not to support it because I think it will create jobs. That being said, it was a real eye opener for people to say we are doing something for Nike, but what about everybody else. But I think the biggest thing for the folks who read your paper and work here, is figuring how to provide people new skills and get them to work.

That's something of the TANF situation as well.

**J.Z.:** *They cut the JOBS program in TANF, which helped people train for new jobs and provided them basic support during the transition.*

**T.K.:** Right. You have a single mom, who has very limited skill sets, and then you say, get a job. What kind of job is that woman going to get? And then we're going to cut your money off if you don't get a job. So that piece will have a lot of focus.

The other piece for this session, we have a lot of new bonding capacity coming on line because we're paying off a bunch of bonds. So, the question is, what new projects are we going to build? A lot of construction jobs. That helps everybody, because those jobs create other jobs, and that's going to be good for the economy.

On another issue, I'm really pleased what the governor did in his budget around mental health. He's got some new investments. There are new Medicaid dollars coming on line to support mental health, so this could be a really big session for building the capacity for more outpatient care, more supportive services, more supportive housing, more peer counsel work – the types of things we know work for people in recovery.

**J.Z.:** *Is mental health a topic you think the state of Oregon has not dealt with properly in the past?*

**T.K.:** It has been inconsistent. And they have not been, from my perspective, focused enough. I want a complete continuum of care. That's how mental health gets handled. It needs to be coordinated. Some people do need acute care at Junction City or Salem, but not everybody. But the bulk of folks need short-term stays, so they can get back on their feet, they need help with medication, they need supportive housing, so I would say we need investments in that entire continuum, and I think with the governor's budget, we're poised to do that. People need to ask for what they want. The mental health community needs to come in like the schools and say I need this to get this done. At least there would be one focus.



PHOTO BY ISRAEL BAYER

*A street scene in Old Town where a man beds down in a doorway, protected from view by his wheelchair.*

## City, county gear up for one-night count of homeless

STAFF REPORTS

Outreach workers from organizations throughout Portland and Multnomah County will be out at the end of January trying to determine exactly how many people are homeless in this area.

The work is in partnership with Portland and Multnomah County to compile both the numbers and demographics of people experiencing homelessness, from the Columbia Gorge to the floating camps on the Willamette River. The date for the one-night count is Jan. 30, however people will be surveyed on their sleeping status for that night through the week.

The homeless count is conducted to learn more about the individuals and families experiencing homelessness who are unsheltered. The report is federally mandated and happens in communities around the U.S. throughout 2013.

"The street count is a snapshot of homelessness in our community," says housing commissioner Nick Fish. "Knowledge is power – the better we understand the challenge facing us, the better we can respond."

The count captures those sleeping

outside – on the street, in a car or abandoned building. In combination with the One-Night Shelter Count, which is conducted on the same night, the homeless count provides information on scope of homelessness and the need for services. The shelter count gathers information on people sleeping in or turned away from emergency shelters, motels, and transitional housing.

The homeless and shelter count is coming at a time when Multnomah County and the City of Portland are updating the 10-year plan to end homelessness. The updated plan will look at a broader population of people to target for housing, specifically families experiencing homelessness.

Generally accepted as an undercount, the 2011 one-night count tallied more than 4,600 people who were homeless. Nearly half were families with children, a 35 percent increase over the previous count in 2009.

Meanwhile, the city's financial crunch has the Portland Housing Bureau contemplating a 10 percent reduction in its housing and homeless service programs.



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