

Sales tax election halted Page 4

Hypothermia danger

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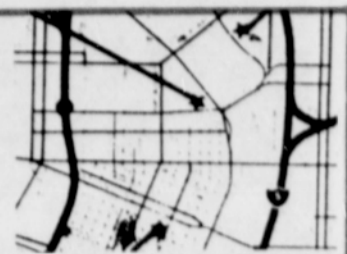
Jazmin marches on

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State, feds continue controversial certification



Hatch heavy equipment readies for Banfield project work.
(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

The continued certification of Hopping Construction Company as a minority business enterprise by the State of Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the federal government's on-again off-again approval of that certification have raised more questions than they have answered.

Why has ODOT continued minority certification of Hopping when the State of Washington, the City of Portland, and Tri-Met, using the same evidence, have denied or cancelled certification?

Why has the ODOT allowed 44 percent of the minority share of federal highway funds to go to one minority business, especially when the minority status of that company is questionable?

The purpose of minority set-asides or goals is to aid disadvantaged minority businesses to become viable and competitive. Has the goal been observed when both Christopher Scarratt, minority member of the Hopping corporation, and his sponsor, R.A. Hatch of Hatch Construction—admit Hopping probably would not survive without Hatch's aid—bonding, line of credit, financial oversight, etc?

How does R.A. Hatch Corpora-

tion's use of Hopping as its minority subcontractor enhance Hatch's bidding success as comparable to his competitors who use independent minority subcontractors?

Why did the Federal Highway Administration reverse its decision on Hopping, overriding the recommendation of its own Regional Civil Rights Officer?

Where do the political trails lead in the state and federal administrations and in the private sector?

Has there been criminal misuse of federal funds or collusion or conspiracy among State officials and/or employees?

These are a few of the questions that should be answered by the Federal Highway Administration's response to Labor-Minority Business Enterprise Coalition, which has asked the Office of Civil Rights of that agency to use its emergency powers to require State decertification of Hopping.

The Coalition has asked FHWA to: a) order ODOT to decertify Hopping; b) determine if R.A. Hatch Construction should be placed on the federal ineligible list; c) recommend that the Oregon Labor Commission determine if Hatch should be placed on Oregon's ineli-

gible list; d) recommend that the Inspector General review any possible improprieties by State officials; e) recommend that the Governor of Oregon appoint an independent commission to review ODOT and its certification procedures. If the State does not accept these recommendations, the Coalition said, federal highway money should be withheld from the State.

The question about Hopping Construction's minority status is not new.

The company was established as a corporation in 1975. R.A. Hatch told a State "Blue Ribbon" committee established to investigate the company's status: "It was a requirement at that time that we promote minority businesses. And so we put Hopping Construction Company into business and the name—the

way the name Hopping came about was everybody—that was Chris' (Scarratt) nickname amongst our crews. Kind of, I guess, after the guy on *Bonanza*...."

"Well, I don't remember if he came to me, or we talked. Probably the way the thing got started is we probably were sitting in a bar someplace and figured it out on a cocktail napkin. At the time we were having a hard time trying to meet our requirements—with the government on those contracts. It was a mess."

Scarratt was employed by R.A. Hatch as a cement finisher and was distantly related to him by marriage. Scarratt continued to work for R.A. Hatch, usually as a foreman, until 1979.

Hopping was originally incorpor-
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Police complaints still cause concern

by Robert Lothian

The Police Internal Investigations Auditing Committee considered 17 complaints in 1983, its first year. Eight of those complaints were from Blacks.

Eleven of the complaints had to do with excessive force or rude conduct on the part of the police, and of those two appeared to lead to some action taken by the committee. Others "fell outside the statutory time limit," no full hearing was recommended, or were scheduled for hearings later.

The committee made nine recommendations for changes in the police internal investigations process. The police bureau is now considering the committee's recommendation that all complaints alleging excessive force with verified medical evidence be classified as important cases for the Police Bureau's Internal Investigations Division to consider. They also recommend that the officer's complaint history be checked, and if

a similar complaint has been filed previously against that officer, that fact be noted. Other recommendations dealt with prompt investigation of complaints by the Police Bureau, and the right of complainants to appeal decisions of the Internal Investigations Division.

When someone has a problem with the way they've been treated by the police, they first seek recourse through the Police Bureau's Internal Investigations Division. That division might rule that the officer in question was guilty of using excessive force or of other misconduct, or if they could rule that the complaint was not a complaint at all.

Before the formation of the Auditing Committee, complainants had no choice but to put up with IID rulings. Now they can appeal to the Auditing Committee, which investigates and can make recommendations for changes to the City Council and the Police Bureau.

Commissioner Charles Jordan, chairman of the City Council side of

the committee, has charged that the police have not been as responsive as they should to the Auditing Committee. He has suggested that there may be a need for a Review Board which has wider authority than the Auditing Committee. Outgoing chairwoman of the citizen's side of the Auditing Committee, Annette I. Jolin, has also suggested that the Police are dragging their feet in responding to the committee's recommendations.

The committee has not looked into allegations surrounding the so-called "dirty 30" group of police officers, a small group within the department who allegedly receive an inordinate number of complaints.

"We haven't checked that out, actually," said Jolin. "We haven't gone through the officer complaint cards to see if some officers are getting more complaints," she said. The committee has considered such action, she said, but hasn't decided because it may overstep the committee's authority. The Internal Audit

Committee's job is to monitor the police internal investigations process and not to seek discipline for individual officers, she said. "We can't ask for discipline. This committee does not have the power to discipline officers...the assumption behind that is that it's really a Bureau management problem."

"The police fear has been that we're a kangaroo court," she said. "I think to some degree, it's real important that we don't do that."

Jolin, who was a Portland Police Officer herself for three-and-a-half years until 1979, and who teaches criminology at PSU, PCC and the Oregon Police Academy while working toward a Ph.D. in Criminology, was recently replaced by the Rev. John Garlington as head of the citizens Audit Committee.

She said another concern of the committee has been that when a citizen makes a complaint to the Police Bureau, the Bureau runs a computer check on that person. "We thought
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Maurice Ramos, 10, Nambi Booker, 6, and Tawanna Mooton, 6, learn Black History the fun way with the help of program designer Kamau Anderson at the African American Cultural Festival sponsored by the Black Educational Center.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Africa: Famine and politics prove an explosive combination

by A.M. Babu
Pacific News Service

Many governments are likely to fall as Africa endures a catastrophic food crisis this year, because people are convinced that bad leadership and misguided economic policies are to blame.

Adding fire to the criticism this time will be the Islamic revival sweeping large parts of the continent.

There is no question about the gravity of the situation. A persistent drought has engulfed most of Africa, especially the south and east, for more than three years. This year famine or acute malnutrition will affect an estimated 150 million people unless there is an immediate, dramatic change in the food supply.

Dismal economic conditions will

make the damage worse. For one thing, in most countries the transport system has deteriorated badly—roads are impassable, vehicles don't run for lack of spare parts, parts are unobtainable for lack of foreign exchange—making food distribution nearly impossible.

These difficulties, combined with corrupt and inefficient bureaucracies, mean the situation could equal the horrors of the early 1970s, which led to general political instability in the Sahel.

As early as last summer, a World Food Council report said the situation "threatens the survival of some African nations. It undermines their economic, social and political systems and causes great human suffering."

In the months since then there have been several coups and at-

tempted coups which can be linked to the worsening economic situation and food crisis.

•In Nigeria, a military coup toppled the three-month civilian government. Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, is relatively prosperous, and its attempt to restore civilian rule and its multi-party democracy had been a source of hope to those African countries currently dominated by the military or one party.

•In September, young army officers in Upper Volta took over from older pro-French jackboots in a bloodless coup—and immediately declared their objective was to produce food and repair the nearly tattered economy.

•The first week of 1984 brought vicious riots protesting food price hikes in Tunisia, long a model of a

stable and strongly pro-Western country. President Bourguiba was forced to cancel the price rise.

A close look at these incidents reveals important elements in the current situation.

For example, Nigeria faced a fate which other countries have already suffered. The country was trying to honor conditions set by the International Monetary Fund, the IMF. In practice, this means enriching the rich at the expense of the poor.

IMF-mandated price increases raise the cost of living for the poor, which only creates conditions for social explosions. These, in turn, lead to ruthless military dictatorships of the kind seen in the Philippines, Thailand and Zaire.

In Tunisia, the charismatic Bourguiba has dominated the political arena for nearly 30 years—but he

lost his mesmerizing power over the people as soon as he raised food prices, abiding by IMF conditions.

These stories also hint at another, newer factor. For example, the coup leaders in Upper Volta were reportedly supporters of Libyan leader Kadafy and his strong Islamic revival tendency.

In Tunisia, a year ago, Bourguiba ordered several Muslim fundamentalists arrested for "anti-government activities." These leaders were among those seeking to introduce new social codes in conformance with Islamic precepts—inspired by the Iranian revolution—and they now take credit for inspiring the food riots.

This story can be repeated all over Africa—a bad economic situation mixed with a return to some basic anti-Western beliefs.

Another cause of discontent is that many people still remember the 1960s when Africa was self-sufficient in food, and agriculture was growing. In the 1970s, however, production dropped significantly.

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Bank bear a large portion of the blame for this.

For instance, it was the World Bank, with FAO assistance, which emphasized growing cash crops—making it easier to get credits for planting tea or coffee rather than rice or wheat or maize.

FAO "experts"—agronomists or specialists in some related field—have no overall view of the role agriculture plays in a national economy. Their advice tends to be one-sided
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