

"Buy Northeast," says developer

by Robert Lothian

"There is so much needed in this area, but the opportunities are boundless."

Mike Debman was talking about community development in inner-Northeast Portland. He is a partner with his brother Chad Debman in the B. Chadwick Group, a development company, and chairman of the board of the Union-Vancouver-Williams (U-V-W) Business Development Project.

The new U-V-W Project is aimed at attracting new business, revitalizing existing business and ridding inner-Northeast of street crime. It is a joint project of the Portland Development Commission (PDC), the Oregon Downtown Development Association, and local business and community groups.

The project is funded by the PDC and by contributions from businesses and individuals from Northeast Portland, Debman said. Parkrose and Hawthorne business districts are benefiting from similar projects.

Technically, the U-V-W Project covers an area bounded by Union and Williams and Broadway and Shaver, but the issues involved apply to the entire inner-Northeast area, according to Debman, who sees the project as helping to turnaround the area's blighted image.

The project is just getting off the ground. A manager, McKinley Williams, was hired recently and he plans on visiting each business in the area to survey their needs. His job will be to act as a kind of mall manager for businesses, giving advice and making connections so they can operate more efficiently and remain in the area. Williams welcomes comments and suggestions at the project office, 3802 N.E. Union Ave.

Debman listed the community's attractive features for prospective businesses—low rent, availability of land and existing buildings, and easy access to the freeway and to downtown.

Also, said Debman, "The Black experience could be a rich one indeed if we had the facilities and experience to develop that." He listed food, art and music as assets already in the community that could attract business.

"If you put a good restaurant on Union with good food at a reasonable price, you'll get lines of people," he

said.

But it will take entrepreneurship, business people willing to take some chances and front some seed money, and it will take a lot of community support, Debman added. "Unless that entrepreneur is willing to take the actual risk, it's all for naught."

Entrepreneurs willing to back new businesses provide opportunities for the local talent to get started. "That's how money is going to start circulating back into the community," he said.

Debman cautioned that new suburban-style construction can lead to high rents that local business people can't afford. When a tenant is considering whether to locate on Union Ave. or in Lloyd Center and the rents are about the same, it is obvious which location will be chosen, said Debman. He urged developers "to try and restore what you've got and keep your costs down" so that an incentive can be offered to tenants.

"One of the problems with Union Square is that the rents are too high, and also it doesn't have the support businesses around it that bring in the foot traffic," Debman said. He said that Union Square isn't the problem, but the business climate in the area in general. He commended the developers of Union Square for getting the ball rolling in bringing business back to Union Ave.

Debman's firm remodeled a large house on Union Ave. and converted it to offices for local businesses. The

company is also working on restoring several other run-down buildings in the area.

Debman believes the first step for a successful U-V-W Project is for residents to pull together and clean up litter and blight—"the breeding ground for undesirable elements," he

said. "We need all the help we can get."

The length of the project contract is two years. "In that respect, Rome wasn't built in a day," said Debman. "It's a long struggle and we're in it for the long haul. Buy Northeast Portland," he said.

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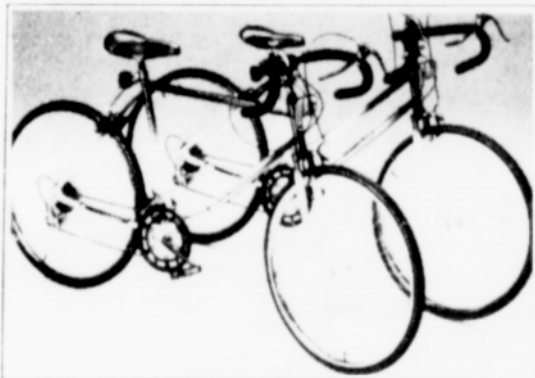
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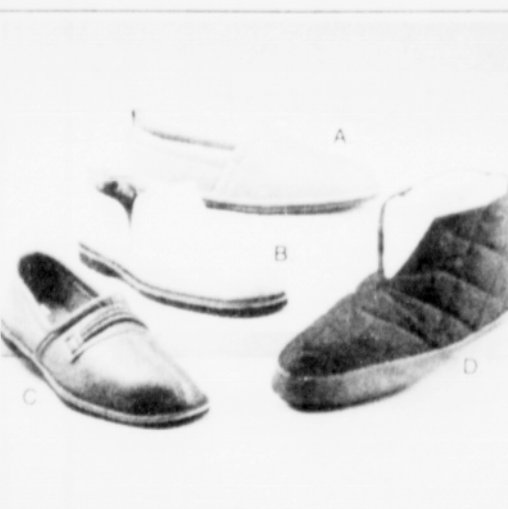


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Tri-Met meeting on changes

Tri-Met will hold an additional workshop at the King Neighborhood Facility, making it more accessible for North and Northeast residents. The purpose for the workshops are to familiarize the public with changes and cuts in bus service following the start of the new Light Rail system. There will be a question and answer period.

This workshop will be co-sponsored by the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods, at 4815 N.E. 7th in the King Facility Cafetorium on Dec. 11, at 7:00 p.m. Everyone interested is invited to attend. For additional information, call 248-4575.

Weatherization workshop slated

The Community Energy Project is holding 30 free workshops on home weatherization in inner northeast and southeast neighborhoods through January. Workshop participants learn many low-cost and no-cost ways to lower fuel bills and stay warmer. Income-eligible households receive \$50 worth of free weatherization materials including caulking, weatherstripping and plastic storm window kits.

The workshops are held at various community centers and host homes in Humboldt, Boise, Eliot, Kerns, and Hosford-Abernethy neighborhoods. This project is sponsored by the city Bureau of Community Development and the Community Energy Project.

The next workshops will be held Dec. 5, 7:00-9:00 p.m. at Albina Youth Opportunity Center, 3710 N. Mississippi; and Dec. 11, 7:00-9:00 p.m. at Dishman Community Center, 77 N.E. Knott.

Participants must pre-register. To pre-register for the above workshops or to find out about other scheduled workshops call the Eliot Energy House at 284-7868.