

Bike Fair Teaches Traffic Safety

Children pick up some tips on safety and are given free helmets during a traffic fair at a neighborhood market.

See Metro, inside

Contact Lens Study Starts

Pacific University's Family Vision Center is recruiting patients for a contact lens study.

See Health, Page A5

Festival Features Sporting Events

Soccer, tennis and golf are part of Lake Oswego's 3rd International Festival.

See Sports, Page B3

North-South Rail Tax Proposed

Portland voters will decide if taxes should help pay for new Max rail line.

See Vancouver, Page B2

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THE WEEK IN REVIEW

New Bank Proposed For N/NE

Plan Would Boost Lending To Inner Portland Residents

Capital is being raised to open a community bank to make loans to residents and businesses of North and Northeast Portland.

The bank would be modeled after Chicago's SouthShore Bank, a financial institution which helped revitalize depressed parts of Chicago. SouthShore is considered one of the most successful development banks in the country.

Leon C. Smith is the chief executive officer of the venture, called Northeast Portland Community Bancorp., which currently has an office at PacifiCorp Financial Services, 825 N.E. Multnomah St.

"We're optimistic, committed to making it happen and in as good a position as any bank has seen," Smith said.

The bank would follow the SouthShore model by offering loans to borrowers who otherwise have trouble getting credit because of past credit troubles or other problems.

Smith said his goal is to invigorate North and Northeast Portland neighborhoods beyond a stereotype of abandoned businesses and dilapidated houses.

Currently, the area suffers from low mortgage lending. As an example home loans to North/Northeast neighborhoods occurs at just 61 percent of the city as a whole, Smith said. And in the inner-city neighborhoods of King, Vernon, Piedmont, Humboldt, Sabin and Boise, that drops to 35 percent.

Another problem shows up when looking at lending to blacks. The African American population has only 0.7 percent of the business loans made, while accounting for 7.5 percent of the city's population.

The new bank would reduce its lending risks by relying on government guarantees and grants.

Smith was named the chief executive officer after a national search. He was formerly CEO of Seattle's Emerald City Bank and served at SeaFirst in Seattle and in banking positions in Boston and Chicago.

He said the new bank has about \$2 million in capital from the settlement of a lawsuit between PacifiCorp and several other groups. PacifiCorp was sued by environmentalists for its use of ratepayer money in recovering losses on two nuclear plant projects.

The bank is trying to raise another \$4 million through a public offering this fall.



Francene Grewe (left) and Patricia Beckman outside a Northeast Portland home advertised for sale. A federal housing program now provides no-interest loans as down payments for first-time home buyers.

Bankers Promote Home Loans For Inner-City

BY MICHAEL LEIGHTON

People who thought they couldn't buy a house because they don't have the down payment are getting help.

Under a program called Project Down Payment, a first-time home buyer can buy a house in many of Portland's inner-city neighborhoods with a minimum \$1,000 cash payment towards the purchase.

The program offers zero-interest loans on down payment and closing costs and market-rate loans, currently at about 8 percent interest, on the mortgage.

For many people, that means they can invest in a home at the same cost or even less money than renting.

Almost any bank participates in the federal program, but Norwest Mortgage's Lloyd

Center branch has been out promoting the project.

"We want to help people get into a house before they lose hope," said Francene Grewe, Norwest branch manager. Grewe said Norwest is committed to helping revitalize and stabilize Portland's inner city and has contributed \$48,000 to the project.

She said home owners tend to make neighborhoods more stable, safer from crime and take better care of their properties.

Project Down Payment is great for single mothers or families who have no savings for closing costs, but can afford monthly payments, Grewe said.

The loans are targeted for households with incomes at 20 percent below Portland's average medium income, which would be \$33,850 a year for a family of four.

Fifty percent of the funds are set aside

for minorities.

Participants must also have lived in the program's targeted neighborhoods for six months. These neighborhoods include all of North Portland and most of inner-Northeast and inner-Southeast Portland.

Another requirement is that applicants attend a home buyer class offered by the Portland Housing Center, a non-profit agency.

Income, debts, credit history, employment and savings are reviewed to develop house purchase plans and become pre-qualified for a home purchase. Initial paperwork can be done at participating banks.

Grewe invites anyone who feels they may qualify for the project to call her at 235-1940. You may also contact the housing center at 282-7744 or the Housing Authority of Portland at 228-2178.

Jaguar Reports Increases In Black Staffing

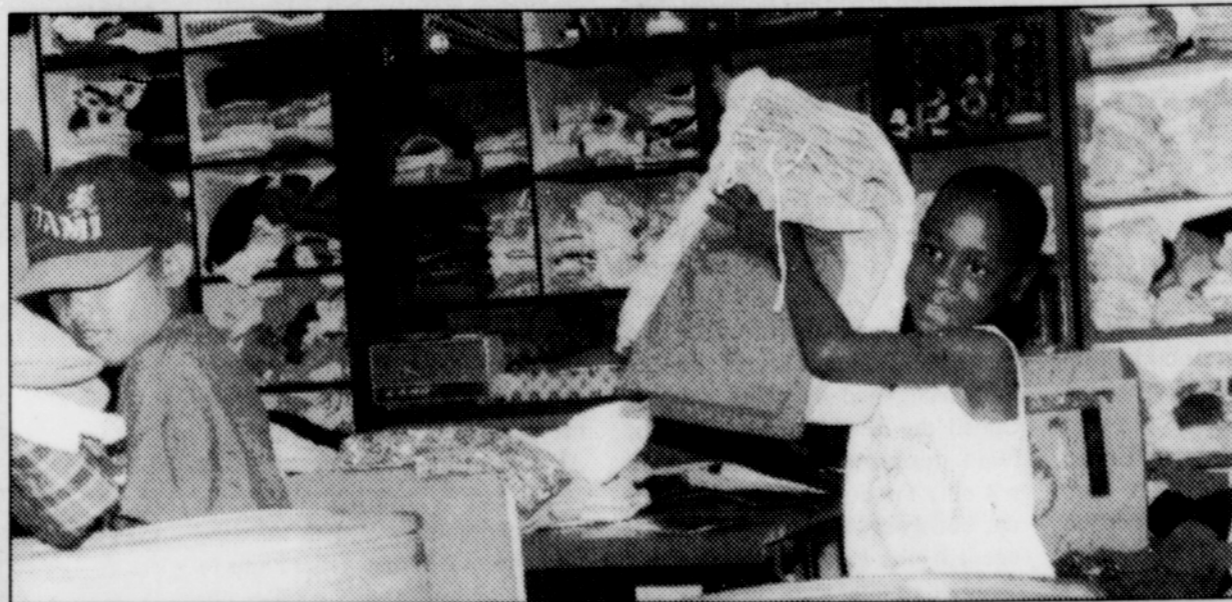
In response to a national outcry from African Americans over its internal policies for hiring, upgrading, having black-owned dealerships and using black suppliers, Jaguar Cars of America president Michael Dale says that, "some eight percent of Jaguar's U.S.'s management is now African American, up from zero at the time of the change of management (purchased by Ford Motor Co.) of Jaguar U.S. in 1990. Moreover, these statistics need to be placed against the fact that during the same period, Jaguar U.S. overall headcount was being reduced by 38 percent to improve our cost competitiveness. It may be argued that there remains room for further progress, but the direction is strongly positive." Dale says that the number of dealers has been reduced leaving very little opportunity for new dealer recruitment. He also said that he is "Personally concerned and sensitive" to the broader context of increasing African Americans' involvement with his company.

Health Care Reform

A coalition of black health care professionals have initiated a full-scale program to support having President Clinton's health care plan passed with the universal health care provision included. The grass-roots organization comprised of over 20 black groups supports Senator Edward Kennedy's Senate Bill and says: "Health care reform is a matter of life and death for many African Americans because they die at a higher rate from preventable diseases than other American." Their report says that most of the current problems of black health can be cured with better health program. They say approximately 55 percent blacks are uninsured or underinsured and over three and a half million blacks work but have no health care insurance. They also report that: African American infants are twice as likely as white infants to die before their first birthdays; African American men are less likely to receive bypass surgery than white men, even though heart disease is the number one killer of black men and breast cancer is the leading killer of black women between the ages of 15 and 54 and cervical cancer is the number two killer of African American women between the ages of 15 and 34.

Chavis Fails To Settle Suit

An attempt by NAACP Executive Director Benjamin Chavis to settle a sex discrimination suit against him has apparently backfired. First, Mary E. Stansel, the woman who threatened the suit backed out of a settlement and filed the complaint. Then Chavis drew criticism when it was learned he offered to pay Stansel \$322,000 not to file the suit.



Clothing Drive, Health Clinic Scheduled

Caleb McGuire, 6, (left) and Malcom Barnum, 8, stack clothing at the Low Income Families Emergency Center at 2746 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in preparation of a clothing drive giveaway and free health immunization clinic to be held Aug. 27 at 10 a.m. at Peninsula Park Community Center, North Portland Boulevard and Albina Avenue. SEE HEALTH, PAGE A5 INSIDE.

School Offices Open Thursday For Student Registration

Principals and secretaries will be in all Portland school offices beginning Thursday (Aug. 18) between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to handle new student registration and answer questions from parents.

Parents wishing to enroll their children in prekindergarten and kindergarten classes must bring the child's birth certificate and immunization records to complete registration. All new students in other grades must have immunization records to register in school.

Orientation sessions for freshmen and other high school students are scheduled before school officially begins on Sept. 8. Parents and students can call their neighborhood school for orientation dates and times.

Teachers and counselors are scheduled to return to schools Aug. 30 for planning.