

Fairview Training Center Closure Plan on Schedule

Employees Facing Layoffs Getting Job-Search Help

Fairview Training Center in Salem is shrinking on schedule. The State's largest residential training center for persons with developmental disabilities from all over Oregon now has 138 residents, fewer than half the number who were when a major downsizing started early in 1998. Fairview will close in 2000.

As residents move to small community-based group homes around the state, Fairview staffing also continues a steady decline, following a plan designed to maintain services and help departing employees find other work.

Since May 1998, 480 workers facing possible layoff have found other jobs or retired. Of those, 135 have found employment in-group homes, and many are caring for the same people they worked with while at Fairview. Only nine employees have actually lost their jobs.

find other opportunities or plan for retirement," says Fairview Superintendent Jon Cooper.

"Fairview employees have done a fantastic job of continuing to provide high-quality care for residents during this difficult transition," Cooper says. "Some who have unique skills even returned to do emergency work when needed."

An employee transition team has been working since 1997 to help employees with interviewing skills, resume writing, retirement counseling and to find resources or training for other jobs. Several state agencies agreed to give transitioning Fairview employees special consideration for

job openings. A total of 203 employees have found jobs with various divisions of the state Department of Human Resources, including those who went to work in group homes.

Cooper says more than 900 employees remain at Fairview, a number that will drop to fewer than 150 by December. The transition team is asking employees. Employers with questions can call (503) 986-4881 for more information.

The institution is on schedule to close early in 2000, following a national trend to move people with developmental disabilities from large institutions into community-based group homes that house five or fewer residents.

House Passes Energy Deregulation Bill

SALEM — The Oregon House of Representatives on Friday passed an energy deregulation bill allowing commercial and industrial power customers a choice of suppliers beginning October 1, 2001.

Residential users may eventually get a similar choice, but not until the public Utilities Commission has had a chance to study deregulation and determine its benefits to customers. Under SB 1149, the PUC would report back to the Legislature by January 1, 2003.

Residential consumers, beginning Oct. 1, 2001, will be given a chance to choose between fixed rates or rates based on the open market. The PUC will continue to regulate the industry for residential power customers in Oregon.

The bill's carrier in the House, Rep. Jim Welsh, R-Elmira, called it, "a made in Oregon product that protects the small ratepayer and offers them benefits from an open market."

To insure that "public purpose" item, such as programs for conservation, renewable energy resources development and low-income weatherization remain in place, a 3 percent surcharge will be added to ratepayer's bills.

Rep. Welsh said, "this bill makes Oregon the 23rd state to deregulate its electric market. It's not the final piece of legislation but it is the first move from a monopoly system to a free market."

The bill has already passed the Senate and will now go to the governor for his signature.

Popular Ferry Reopens

Just a week after deciding to close popular ferry service across the Willamette River for at least a month, Marion and Yamhill County officials have announced the re-opening of the Wheatland Ferry. Yamhill County has coordinated with the U-S Army Corps of Engineers to acquire an "emergency" dredging permit, which allowed a minimal amount of material to be removed from the river to allow the ferry to operate. Low river levels forced the ferry into

dry dock last week. The dredging was completed Friday afternoon and the ferry resumed normal operations Saturday. The ferry operates between Maud Williamson state Park and Brooks in the Willamette Valley. -28- 'Shakespeare For Dummies' (CORVALLIS) — A Corvallis man has written a new book designed to help so-called "dummies" better understand

Shakespeare. Ray Lichner is the author of the new book, "Shakespeare For Dummies." Although he admits that Shakespeare's sentence structure may seem backwards at first, he says it's not hard to understand with a little training. He says Shakespeare actually wrote "popular entertainment" for the masses of his time, and not for the educated elite.

Salmonella Traced To Juice

HILLSBORO, OREGON — At least four people in Washington County have now been infected with salmonella. The infection has been traced to orange juice distributed by Sun Orchard of Tempe, Arizona. The juice is marketed under the "Aloha Juice Company" and "Zupan's Markets" labels. Consumers who have the juice in

their refrigerators are being told to discard it or return it to the point of purchase. A simultaneous outbreak of the same infection has been identified in the Seattle area. Symptoms of salmonella poisoning... including diarrhea, fever, and vomiting... develop within one to four days after consuming contaminated food or drink.

Education Crisis

A group of well established minority advocates claims Portland's public schools are in an "education emergency". Its members are pledging to turn up the heat on parents and teachers, as well as students, to bring grades up. Ron Herndon of the Black United

Front says the goal is to have at least 95-percent of all students performing at-or-above grade level. They're also organizing volunteer teams to go into schools to help out. And they want parents to make sure their kids have homework, and that they're doing it.

Twist To Transportation Plan

The fight over state spending on highway projects in Oregon has gotten more complicated. Senate President Brady Adams says he'll permit just one vote on a transportation package that includes a boost in the gas tax and higher vehicle-registration fees. Chair of the Senate

Transportation Committee, Republican Marilyn Shannon of Brooks, says she'll push to make sure the bill includes a repeal of the weight-mile tax for trucks. Shannon says it could take most of this week to come up with a transportation proposal for her committee to consider.

More Airport Construction

PORTLAND, OREGON — More car-and-foot-traffic congestion is expected as 400-Million dollars-worth of construction gets underway at Portland International Airport. Projects include expanding the south terminal, building a light rail terminal, putting up a weather canopy between the not-yet-finished garage and main terminal, remodeling the main terminal and widening Airport Way. Fourteen-Million people fly into and out of PDX every year, double the number of travelers from just ten years ago.

Military Recruiting Bill Advances

SALEM, OREGON — Despite a promised veto by Governor John Kitzhaber, the Oregon House has moved to require school districts to allow military recruiters on high school campuses. The state's largest district, Portland, banned recruiters in 1995. Two years later the Oregon legislature passed a bill to allow recruiters at high schools. But Kitzhaber vetoed that bill, saying the recruiting issue should be up to local district control.

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