

METRO *Life*

The Portland Observer

SECTION B

Community Calendar

Native American Day

Join Wisdom of the Elders as we honor our elders and acknowledge the role our youth and veterans play in preserving Native American culture. All cultures welcome to attend. "Native American Day" will be on Sunday, October 10 from Noon to 5 PM at the Smith Memorial Ballroom at Portland State University. Call 503/775-4014.

Adventures in the City

Adventures in the City invites kids to become City Kids and discover the excitement and surprises of downtown Portland. This free, hands-on celebration of art, entertainment and downtown takes place Friday, October 15 and Saturday, October 16 at Pioneer Courthouse Square from 10 AM to 4 PM.

The Wellness Village

The African American Health Coalition need volunteers to staff the 4th Annual Wellness Village, scheduled for October 23rd at the Center of Self Enhancement. The Wellness Village is a one day event drawing people from the community for interactive activities such as health screenings, physical fitness, healthy cooking demonstrations, dynamic speakers, health education workshops and children's activities. Call 503/413-1850.

I Believe I Can Fly

The African American Chamber of Commerce and The Walker Institute will present the second in a series of community recognition and community pride events. "I BELIEVE I CAN FLY - The Sequel" will be held on Saturday night, October 23 at Double Tree Jantzen Beach. The event will recognize minority men, businesses, professionals and corporate partners. Call 503/244-5794, ext. 45.

Bowl for Breath

For Halloween this year, you can help make a difference in cystic fibrosis research by participating in the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation's annual Bowl for Breath at Sunset Bowl in Beaverton. Bowl for Breath includes both a COSMIC BOWL on Friday, October 29 from Midnight to 2 AM, and a fun-filled BOWL-A-THON day on Saturday for the whole family. To sign up, please call 503/226-3435.

Annual Arty Party

Young Audiences' annual celebration to support arts programming in Oregon and Southwest Washington schools will be held at the Oregon College of Art & Craft, 8245 SW Barnes Road, Portland, on Saturday, October 16 at 7 PM. Guests will participate in hands-on-art demonstrations by YA artists, bid on enticing auction items, and enjoy music, gourmet food and northwest beverages. Call 503/225-5900 or 360/693-1829.

Japanese Pioneers

The Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center (ONLC) invites the community to the opening reception on October 10, at 2 PM for "Determined to Succeed - Oregon's Issei," an exhibit capturing the spirit of first generation Japanese immigrants in our state. The reception will be hosted by the ONLC located at 117 NW 2nd Avenue in Portland.

Law Class for Bicyclists

On Thursday, October 28, from 5:30 PM to 7 PM, The Multnomah Bar Association is hosting a class on Oregon's vehicle laws from a bicyclist's perspective with Bike Lawyer Ray Thomas. The event will be at the Bicycle Transportation Alliance, 1117 SW Washington in downtown Portland. The cost is free. Call Kristin Kidd at 503/228-5222 to pre-register.

Portland Urban League president resigns

PORTLAND, Ore.- The president and chief operating officer of the Urban League of Portland will resign amid allegations that the agency mismanaged public money under his leadership.

Lawrence Dark will vacate his \$95,000-a-year job on Friday, more than five years after taking over at the Urban League, one of Oregon's most prominent social service agencies that serve blacks, senior citizens, youths and low-income families. In a prepared statement, Dark said, "It is clear to me that my continued service to the league will serve only to fuel the existing controversy surrounding Multnomah County's recent review of the league's finances, and will threaten to destroy the excellent reputation the league has earned over the past 54 years of service to Portland's African American community unless a change in leadership occurs."

"The Urban League of Portland as

an institution is much more important than anyone individual including me."

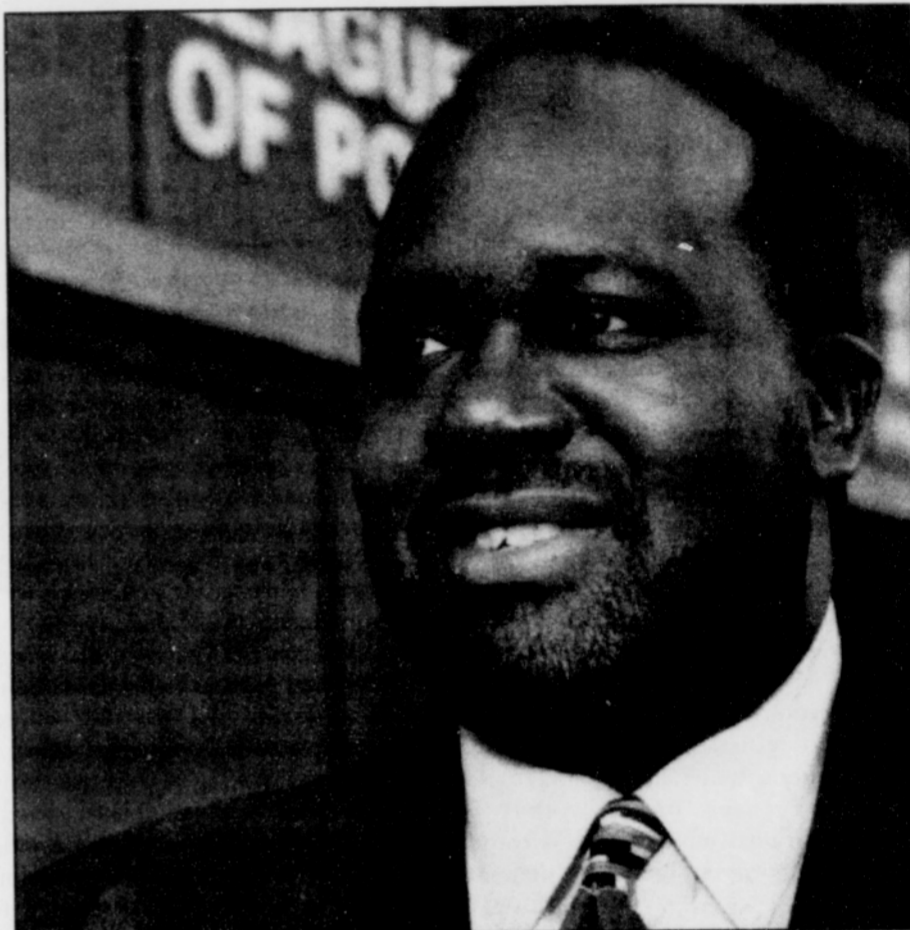
Dark, 46, is leaving because he "cares very much about the Urban League's reputation," his lawyer, Thane Tienson, told The Observer.

"It's my belief and understanding that there has been absolutely no wrongdoing on his part," Tienson added. "He's an honest, honorable and decent person, and he cares about the agency's reputation, as well as his own. His main concern is the survival of the institution."

A recent review by Multnomah County officials revealed 70 financial irregularities at the agency, including several questionable expenditures and a lack of oversight by its board of directors.

Tienson said his client had been "lulled into a sense of security" about the league's financial status.

"It's probably a fair charge that there was a level of mismanagement," he said.



Thirteen Portland-area residents were presented to the world as better people

In a September 30 ceremony before a large and enthusiastic audience at Lutheran Inner City Ministries, the 13 former offenders graduated from the 12-step behavioral therapy program offered by Better People, a privately-funded nonprofit which also offers job-placement to those with criminal records.

The therapy, known as Moral Recognition Therapy, stresses responsibility and the consequences of one's decisions. Eight of the graduates stood before the crowd and told their stories of release from depression, crime, drugs, and hopelessness.

The crowd of more than a hundred friends and family, including Metro Commissioner David Bragdon, gave the graduates repeated applause and encouragement.

Better People, which opened in June 1998, has placed more than 40 former offenders in jobs which average almost \$9 per hour plus health benefits. Its funding is strictly private, with initial funds coming from the Black united Fund of Oregon and individual citizens and recent grants from the Murdock Trust and the Meyer Trust.

For more information about Better People, call 281-2663 or visit

<http://betterpeople.org> on the internet.

photo by M. Washington



Freightliner Seeks Enterprise Zone Contract

By DARRYL SWAN

Freightliner Inc., a Portland-based heavy-duty truck manufacturer, has entered a new phase of negotiations with city and neighborhood agencies to expand its Swan Island operations further into the North and Northeast neighborhoods. Freightliner is seeking the city's approval to begin the expansion under the North/Northeast Enterprise Zone designation, which would exempt the corporation from new property taxes for up to five years. The exemption is only applied to new buildings and equipment, and does not affect property currently on the tax rolls. The tax abatement would total \$6.6 million over the five-year period. However, because companies receive credit against income taxes based on the amount of property taxes they pay, Freightliner's state and federal income taxes would increase during the five-year period. The five-year tax abatement is generally viewed as a financial trade-off between the city and Freightliner to spur economic growth in the North/Northeast neighborhood.

"Freightliner has done what they need to do to go ahead and start construction," said Bob

Alexander, a program coordinator for the Portland Development Commission. However, even should construction begin immediately, the corporation could still be denied the tax abatement if contract negotiations unravel.

"If for some reason the contract's not approved, they just don't get the tax exemption," Alexander said.

Additionally, benefits from the expansion to North/Northeast residents and businesses could be hamstrung without employee hiring obligations outlined by the Enterprise Zone contract. So far, Freightliner's expansion within the North/Northeast Enterprise Zone has passed a PDC vote last August and has gained the Portland City Council's approval.

"The lease has been basically agreed to," said Freightliner spokesperson Debra Nicholson, who sounded optimistic the expansion plan would move forward. The North/Northeast Economic Development Alliance will now analyze the expansion's effect on the local community, and then forward its findings and suggestions back to the PCC for a final review.

Sam Brooks, Alliance vice-president, anticipates releasing the analysis in around 60 days.

Though the Alliance admits it has no authority to dictate city negotiations, it does serve as a watchdog organization to ensure that Freightliner upholds its end of the agreement.

"Sometimes, in the past, Enterprise Zone recipients have stumbled," Brooks said.

Freightliner's employee recruitment efforts will operate in part with the Urban League and WorkSystems, Inc. as per terms of the agreement, and business located within the Enterprise Zone should get a first crack at supply and contract services.

"We will try to be the community's conscience, to make sure that what they say they will do, they do," Brooks said of Freightliner's commitment to the community. The Alliance will not only look at the economic advantages of Freightliner's expansion, but would also keep a trained eye on environmental, workforce, housing and land use concerns, among others.

"We will try to keep their feet to the fire," Brooks said.

Enterprise Zones, first established in 1986, are geographic regions designated by local government for areas with high unemployment and low-income residents. In 1990, per

capita income in inner North/Northeast Portland was 32 percent below the regional average.

Freightliner's expansion plans include the construction of a new 315,000 square foot corporate headquarters facility in the Humboldt area; moving Research and Development operations into the old headquarters building; the purchase and renovation of the former Boise Cascade Research and Development facility to house Trucks Business Units; and the investment in new products and machinery.

It is anticipated that 1,100 new positions will be filled at Freightliner over the five-year period.

Additionally, other employee benefits would include financial support for public transportation and childcare to low-income families.

In 1996, the Portland City Council reaffirmed the North/Northeast Enterprise Zone for another decade. Since its inception, the North/Northeast zone has seen the placement of 750 inner North/Northeast residents in Enterprise Zone jobs, filling 41 percent of the 1,833 jobs for which it recruited.