

**Business**

**IMAX lightrail renewal approaches**

**Community organizations mobilize the grassroots**

CONTRIBUTED STORY FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Community organizations mobilize the grassroots. With 250 volunteers completing 2,500 surveys in a massive door-to-door sweep, community-based organizations are reaching out to North Portland residents impacted by proposed urban renewal.

On Saturday, January 15, groups such as the Urban League, Environmental Justice Action Group, Coalition for a Livable Future, Community Alliance of Tenants, Portland New Party, JOBS with JUSTICE and others will mobilize their member in neighborhoods near the route of the IMAX.

The new light rail will run up Interstate Avenue, between the Rose

Quarter and the Expo Center. An Urban Renewal Area is proposed along Interstate, possibly stretching up to Williams Avenue in some places, and taking in some industrial districts such as Swan Island. TriMet estimates that \$350 million dollars will be invested around the construction of the new MAX line, and an Urban Renewal Area could add an additional \$100 million dollars for housing, business and livability development projects.

The surveys will ask residents to prioritize spending in six areas: housing, jobs, transportation, parks and environmental clean-up, historic preservation, and public services. The survey was developed in cooperation with the City of Portland and community groups will be compensated at two dollars per survey completed.

Housing and Jobs for Whom? In the past, urban renewal projects (the Coliseum area, the Emmanuel Hospital area, the I-5 corridor) have resulted in massive displacement of poor and minority residents, jobs going to outsiders, and small

businesses going under. Many residents and community groups near the IMAX corridor fear the same with this new project.

"We can prevent the type of 'urban removal' this district has suffered in the past. But we must organize and fight for what's right," says Margaret Carter, acting director of the Urban League and candidate for State Senate in the district. "We can make sure that the jobs created go to neighborhood people, pay living wages, increase skill levels, and create a safe and healthy environment. We can make sure the housing built and remodeled is affordable and goes to low and moderate-income residents. We can make sure that locally owned, minority, and small businesses are the ones who get a boost."

Survey volunteers will be meeting at the office of OAME at 4134 N. Vancouver for a 9 am breakfast and training, canvassing from 10 am to 2 pm and returning for pizza and a quick count. For further information, contact the Urban League, 280-2600 or coalition for a Livable Future, 294-2889.

**UPS scales up recruiting drive**

CONTRIBUTED STORY FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

With Oregon's unemployment rate at an all time low these days, who provides the most competitive jobs in the state?

United Parcel Service, in a move to retain its most promising student employees, is unveiling a new program that virtually pays a student's tuition and school fees. Earn & Learn, as the program is called, has Oregonians jumping at the chance to get a free education.

Decidedly, the Portland-metro area UPS facilities are glad they were selected to participate in the pilot program. "We employ, people in north Portland alone. Needless to say, this is a tremendous benefit to our current and future employees. In fact, it is unmatched by any other employer," says workforce planning manager Dave Hebner.

With Earn & Learn, a part-time package handler can receive \$, per year in assistance (up to \$15,000), paid directly to his or her college per year in ConSern educational loans (for four years), and UPS will forgive the entire loan principal after three to four years of consecutive employment.

According to UPS recruiting manager Lenroe Hawthorne, "Each facet of our tuition reimbursement programs is unbelievable. I just wish we'd had them when I was a student working part-time here."

Tuition assistance for UPS people in part-time management comes in an even larger sum.

Part-time supervisors gain unparalleled management experience and are eligible for \$4,000 per year toward school expenses (up to \$20,000). UPS people are encouraged to pursue higher education in order to be eligible for promotion.

Approximately one-third of Oregon's part-time UPS management crew is a college student.

"Not only do I get to put the UPS stamp of excellence on my own resume, but also the money I make here doesn't go right back out the door to school," says Ron Swan, a Portland State University student who works in part-time management.

"It's really like getting paid twice." UPS has a 92-year history of proven interest in employee and community development, as well as a commitment to educating the future workforce. From the Oregon Independent College Fund and local child development grants to college credit for internal training, UPS has gained notoriety as the best part-time job in America for students (Your Money magazine). For more information about part-time UPS jobs, please call the UPS Jobline at (503) 286-7298 or visit us at [www.ups.com](http://www.ups.com).

**Income gap widens for U.S. families**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Two think tanks report the booming stock market is widening the income gap between the poorest and richest U.S. families. The earnings for the poorest fifth of American families rose less than 1 percent between 1988 and 1998 but jumped 15 percent for the richest fifth, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Economic Policy Institute said in a report issued Tuesday.

Income for the poorest families — defined as two or more relatives living together — rose \$110 to \$12,990 during the 10-year period. For the richest families it increased by \$17,870, to \$137,480, more than 10 times that of the poorest sector, the report found.

"The benefits of this (economic) growth have not been evenly distributed," said Elizabeth McNichol, one of the study's authors. "The incomes of the poor and middle class have fallen or stagnated."

McNichol attributed the widening gap to Wall Street's long-running bull market, which favors wealthy investors; lower-paying service jobs replacing manufacturing jobs; and the largely stagnant minimum wage. The gap between rich and poor was widest in New York, with the poorest fifth earning \$10,770, down \$1,970, while the wealthiest group earned \$152,350, up \$19,680. Income was most evenly distributed in Utah, where the poorest families had incomes of \$18,170 and the richest

\$125,930. The income gap narrowed in just three states — Alaska, Louisiana and Tennessee.

Stephen Moore, director of social policy for the Cato Institute, said the study contorted data to put a negative face on a "spectacular economy."

"The rich are getting richer but the poor are getting richer too in this expansion," said Moore. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Economic Policy Institute are nonprofit, nonpartisan organizations pushing for changes in tax laws and other federal policies to benefit low- and moderate-income families.

The study used before-tax data from the U.S. Census Bureau. The figures were adjusted for inflation.

**Community budget forums set for Portland**

CONTRIBUTED STORY FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The City of Portland has planned a series of activities designed to give citizens a voice in developing the 2000-02 city budget. Telephone surveys are currently underway to determine community priorities for city services, a series of community budget forums will be held between January 31 and February 10, and a web site allowing city residents to fill out an online survey and weigh in on the developing budget will be available from February through

April.

The public is encouraged to attend any of five citizen forums upcoming across the city. The forums are designed so citizens will have an opportunity to talk about community priorities for the budget directly with City Council members and City Bureau Directors. At each forum, participants will review the results of city-wide and neighborhood surveys about budget priorities and citizen satisfaction with city services. Small group discussions with City Commissioners and Bureau Directors will focus on how the City can respond

to community priorities during the development of the 2000-02 biennial budget.

While no testimony will be taken at the community budget forums, the City provides several opportunities for formal and informal public input on the City of Portland budget. An interactive web site will be online following the forums. A proposed budget will be posted online and available from the Office of Finance and Administration in late April. And budget hearings, including an opportunity for public testimony, will be conducted in May and June.

**Urban from page 1**

working in higher education with the League. The University's Institute for Nonprofit Management is already working with the League.

Portland State University, a nationally acclaimed leader in community-based learning, is located along the tree-

lined South Park Blocks of downtown Portland. The University's position in the heart of Oregon's economic and cultural center enables PSU students and faculty to apply scholarly theory to the real-world problems of business and community

organizations. Portland State offers over 100 undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degrees, as well as graduate certificates and continuing education programs. PSU serves more students and confers more masters' degrees annually than any other university.

**Widows from page 5**

acknowledgement of isolation, anger and fear that they both went through. It was during the lonely times in VA hospitals when the African-American couple relied on their abiding love and friendship to carry them through. Norma remembers her determination to "be there" for Michael, and to help him as much as she could. She recalls early in marriage, his nightmares and flashbacks — and also jumping out of bed and going for a gun if she woke him abruptly, an action he told her was an "instinct" bred by the war.

She began asking him "20,000 questions," wanting to know what he went through and what the war was like. "He needed to find peace in some kind of way," she recalls. Once she started questioning, the horrifying details of the war began pouring out. "I was stunned when I thought of all the young men who had been in Vietnam, doing things that, morally and religiously, they knew were wrong."

When Barbara Sonneborn approached her to tell her story — along with many other women, both American

and Vietnamese — in REGRET TO FORM, Norma says, "I had no ideal that it would turn in to what it did." When Barbara sent her copy of the completed film, Norma didn't look it for over a year. Then she was invited to a screening of the film in Berkeley, California, and she watched it for the first time in a theater filled with people. "I was overwhelmed by the effect this film had an audience," she says. "Everything in the film was exactly as Michael had described it to me. Afterwards, an African American vet came up to me and said he was glad I told my story. He said he was in denial for the first 15 years after the war, and for the next 15 he thought he was crazy. The film validates the pain and insanity of the experience. It's very human, very effectively told, and I'm proud of end result. I'm glad I participated because it's a film about feeling and I no longer have to feel ashamed or embarrassed."

"The men are the soldiers," says Norma Banks, "but the widows are the true warriors. I was able to get Michael to forgive himself and have the semblance of a normal, happy life. I made sure that Michael's dreams were accomplished, because I didn't want it to seem that he died in vain."

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