



Business

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Employer group wins national award

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Oregon Employer Council has been recognized as the outstanding state employer council in the country. The National Employer Council selected the Oregon group over nominations from most every state. The Oregon Employer Council (OEC) consists of 20 local councils throughout the state. Members of OEC are private-sector employers who act as an advisory group to the Oregon Employment Department. In addition, many local employer councils sponsor low-cost seminars for employers on topics of importance to business and are involved in many community-oriented events to promote work force development. "Employers pay payroll taxes, and

they would like some better understanding of what happens with those tax dollars," said Gwyn Harvey of Integrated Measurement Systems, state OEC president.

"So, by getting involved with the Oregon Employer Council they learn what happens with their tax dollars. And, if they feel they have other needs than how those dollars are being applied, they can influence change there."

Harvey said the OEC was cited by the National Employer Council for contributions to work force development such as sponsoring scholarships, providing mentoring opportunities, employer seminars, return to work programs, work with veterans, and working with the Oregon Employment Department to stage job fairs, among other activities.

"We created opportunities, helping people get work by providing such things as scholarships, training, and training vouchers," Harvey said. "The Oregon Employer Council really is a unique opportunity for business people to have a voice, to influence, to be facilitators of change in the work force development system." In addition to the recognition for OEC, the National Employer Council named the Douglas County Employer Council as the outstanding local employer council in a small community.

This is the second consecutive year an employer council from Oregon has received national honors. The South Coast Employer Council from Coos Bay was named council of the year in 1999 by the National Employer Council.

Low-interest bonds issued to stimulate economy and expand affordable housing

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Oregon's Private Activity Bond Committee, in an effort to help stimulate the economy and provide more affordable housing in Oregon, has allocated \$45 million that will be issued as tax-exempt bonds to finance a number of needed projects throughout the state. The two most notable projects are an ethanol production facility and a rent-restricted housing complex for frail and low-income seniors.

The Oregon Office of Energy received \$15 million from the PAB Committee to help build the ethanol production facility near Clatskanie in Columbia County. This will be the first ethanol plant built in the state of Oregon. During construction, which is expected to last 14 to 16 months, the plant will generate 500 to 700 construction jobs. After construction, the plant will employ 80 people and produce an annual payroll of about \$3.7 million.

"This is an outstanding project, one that is not only environmentally sound, but also one that will provide much needed jobs for the people of Columbia County," Gary Bruebaker, Deputy State Treasurer and member of the PAB Committee, said. "The family-wage jobs that this plant will generate will pay nearly 150 percent of the average wage for Columbia County. I am excited to be able to play a small part in this economic expansion for the people in this part of our state."

The Housing Authority of Portland received \$22.5 million to fund affordable housing projects. The Housing Authority will use \$9.5 million to help construct a rent-restricted housing complex in Gresham for frail and low-income seniors. This project will also include an adult day health center, which will be operated by Providence Health Systems. The Housing Authority will use its remaining \$13 million to in part an affordable housing development in Portland's River District. This project will contain 181 residential rental units.

"Providing safe, affordable housing is a critical issue for many Oregonians," Bruebaker said. "As we finance these and other housing projects throughout the state, we not only give people safety and shelter, we also provide an economic stimulus from the family-wage jobs created."

The Private Activity Bond Committee, which Bruebaker has served on for the past seven years, approves the issuance of private activity bonds. These bonds are tax-exempt and designed to provide maximum economic benefit to the citizens of Oregon. They are typically used to fund economic development, housing, education, public works, energy, waste management and transportation projects; the tax-exempt feature helps provide low-cost financing for these projects. Each year the state of Oregon has \$150 million of private activity bonds to allocate.

PDC announces housing projects chosen for \$4.3 million in funding

CONTRIBUTED STORY
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The Portland Development Commission's Housing Department has announced the projects that will receive funding through the Commission's fall request-for-proposal process. Twice a year (spring and fall), PDC solicits and receives proposals from for-profit and non-profit housing developers. A selection committee comprised of members

of the community familiar with housing issues weighs the proposals against city-identified criteria in order to award funds. Funds can be used for construction of affordable housing and mixed-use developments (for example, street level businesses with housing above.) "I am proud of PDC's continued commitment to bridging the gap for thousands of Portlanders by building housing they can afford," said Mayor Vera Katz. "As we develop my Mayor's Proposed Budget of

Housing and Community Development to seek innovative ways to not only increase the number of rental units people can afford, but develop ways to make more of them homeowners," Katz added.

In the fall of 1999 round of funding, 12 projects were chosen for a funding total of \$4,381,215. The projects will result in 623 new units of housing (both rental and ownership) all of which will be affordable to individuals and families earning 0-60% of area median income.

Crash from page 1

"From his observation it was nose first," Smith said.

Tony Alfieri, owner of a squid fishing boat, told the Los Angeles Times that he and his crew "heard a big boom and we saw a big splash, I mean like 200 feet in the air. . . We thought, 'Oh my God, this is not a good deal.' " There were 83 passengers and five crew members aboard, Evans said. Thirty-two were bound for San Francisco, 47 for Seattle, three were continuing on to Eugene, Ore., and one to Fairbanks, Alaska. The two pilots were based in Los Angeles and the three flight attendants were based in Seattle.

The passengers included three airline employees, four employees of sister airline Horizon and 23 relatives or friends of the employees.

Near the entrance of Port Hueneme, where the search effort was based, a 7-foot wooden cross festooned with flowers was erected today. A white plastic angel sat at the base with a candle blowing in a jar.

Some local residents bowed their heads in prayer. From the site they could see search aircraft patrolling offshore above the crash area. "They just stand for a while with their own thoughts. It's tragic," said Neal Silverman, 47, who moved into his beach house just a week ago.

Both pilots were Alaska Airlines veterans. Capt. Ted Thompson, 53,

was hired Aug. 16, 1982, and had 10,400 flying hours with the company. First Officer William Tansky, 57, was hired July 17, 1985, and had 8,047 flying hours with the Seattle-based airline.

The plane itself was built by McDonnell Douglas, now part of Boeing, and delivered to Alaska Airlines in 1992, said John Thom, a spokesman for Boeing's Douglas aircraft unit.

Evans said the plane was serviced Sunday, went through a low-level maintenance check on Jan. 11 and had a more thorough routine check last January.

An FAA service difficulty report for the plane includes 44 incidents dating to 1992, most of them dealing with emergency lights and problems with sliding windows not opening.

In 1995, an engine failed and the plane landed without incident, the report said. The engine was replaced.

Alaska Airlines, which has the image of an Eskimo painted on the tails of its planes, serves more than 40 cities in Alaska, Canada, Mexico and five Western states.

It had two fatal accidents in the 1970s, both in Alaska.

The MD-80 series is a twin-jet version of the more widely known DC-9, with a single aisle and an engine on each side of the tail. It went into service in 1980 and of the 1,167 series planes

delivered, Boeing reported last year, only nine had been lost in accidents. Alaska Airlines has been the subject of an Oakland, Calif., federal grand jury investigation over maintenance and repair records for some MD-80s in the past year.

A Federal Aviation Administration report found two MD-80s that made 840 flights in late 1998 and early 1999 on which records were falsified. Because of the altered records, the aircraft were considered to be in "unairworthy condition," FAA documents said.

Federal prosecutors declined to comment on the probe, citing grand jury secrecy rules. Evans said at the time that the airline was consistently told by federal investigators that airplane safety was not in question and that the inquiries were limited to record keeping.

Referring to that probe, John Kelly, chairman and CEO of Alaska Airlines, said today on CBS-TV's "The Early Show" that the plane involved in the crash "was the subject of no investigation whatsoever."

Before this week, the most recent fatal crash in the United States involving an MD-80 series jet was last summer's American Airlines accident in Little Rock, Ark. Eleven people died and 110 were injured when an MD-82 trying to land in a storm ran off a runway and caught fire.

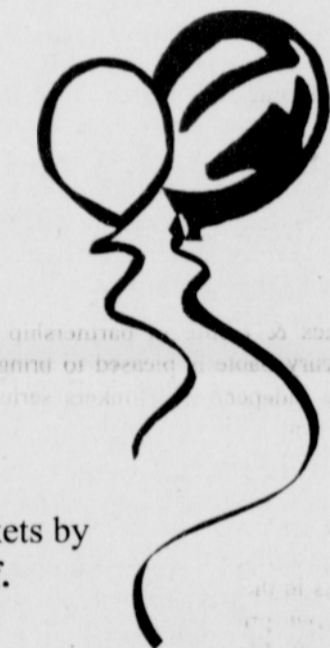
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Report from page 1

School report cards describe student's performance on state test, student attendance and dropout rates, and student SAT scores and teacher education.

District report cards also show how different ethnic groups perform on state test and list administrator experience.

"I am pleased to see many schools in the top categories that are not traditionally spotlighted for their achievement," said Bunn. "Teachers and principals in these schools deserve our congratulations."

Schools received an overall rating of exceptional, strong, satisfactory, low or unacceptable. The percent of

schools in each category is shown below.

Exceptional schools: 3.8 percent (39 schools, including one high school) Strong schools: 35.8 percent (372 schools), Satisfactory schools: 56.7 percent (589 schools) Low schools: 3.6 percent (36 schools) Unacceptable schools: 0.3 percent (3 schools)