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The Portland Observer

New driving rules enacted for 18 years and under

• State hopes new teen driver's license law will make a difference

CONTRIBUTED STORY FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of injury and death for children under the age of 18 during 1998, killing 73 youngsters, a newly released report reveals. The deaths increased dramatically in teens between 15 and 18 years, the time at which they begin to drive. Most of these were preventable deaths, according to the report. Child Death in Oregon, 1998; Oregon Child Fatality Review Team Annual Report was compiled by the Health Division State Technical Assistance Team in the Oregon Department of Human Services. "These findings are very sobering," said Dr. Grant Higginson, state health officer at the Health Division and co-chair of the State Child Fatality Review Team. "A child's death is always tragic," but many of these deaths are preventable. This report identifies opportunities for changes that will improve the safety of our communities and the well-being of our children." An action to reduce some childhood deaths will be implemented on March 1. That is when a new teen driver licensing law goes into effect. Seven of the children under age 17 who died

in motor vehicle crashes in Oregon in 1998 would have been saved if the law had been in place and fully enforced, according to the report. "The 1999 Legislature passed laws to strengthen license requirements and

improve driver training because teens are twice as likely as other drivers to be involved in fatal and injury crashes," said Lorna Youngs, deputy director, Oregon Department of Transportation, Motor Vehicles

Services Division. Beginning March 1, anyone under the age of 18 applying for a driver license must meet new requirements, according to Youngs. They must: Have held an Oregon instruction

permit for at least six months. Certify with parental verification that the teen has at least 50 hours of supervised driving experience, and Complete a traffic safety education course or certify an additional 50 hours of driving experience as described above. After March 1, provisional licenses will restrict the age and number of passengers that a driver under the age of 18 may have in a vehicle as well as the nighttime hours when the teenager may drive. The report contains additional recommendations for preventing vehicle crash fatalities: Increase appropriate vehicle occupant restraint use, particularly among teens Improve enforcement of speed and safety belt laws Decrease drinking and driving Lack of an appropriate restraint, impaired driving, or speeding were a factor in the deaths of 61 percent of children aged 0-17 who died in Oregon motor vehicle crashes in 1998. The importance of reports such as this is that they lead to innovative and practical recommendations that can prevent similar deaths from occurring in the future, Higginson said. A total of 238 child death cases were reviewed by multi-disciplinary teams at the county and state levels for this report. Their reviews find that other



Young drivers from throughout the state scramble to take their exams before new laws take effect.

(Please see 'DMV' page 8)

First shipment of Northwest wheat slated for departure

• Government positive China plans to make good on agreement

ASSOCIATED PRESS
A small sale of U.S. wheat to China is being touted by the Clinton administration as evidence that the Chinese intend to make good on the concessions they made to win improved trade relations. The \$6 million deal announced Monday is the first purchase of U.S. agricultural goods under an agreement China made in November to get U.S. backing for its entry to the World Trade Organization and end annual congressional reviews of its U.S. trade status. It will be the first sale of wheat to China from the Pacific Northwest in more than two decades. Before the agreement, wheat shipments from that region had been barred because of

China's contention that the grain contained excessive amounts of fungus. "We hope that there will be many more such purchases to come," Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said in a speech to the National Farmers Union in Salt Lake City. Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., said the wheat purchase "demonstrates the potential long-term benefits" of improved trade relations with China. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., said the sale was "a welcome first step." Allowing shipments from the Pacific Northwest will save on freight costs and help U.S. farmers compete with producers in other countries for sales in the huge Chinese market. Congress will vote later this year on whether to grant China normal trade relations on a permanent basis. Farm-state lawmakers who support the move have said China needs to make some significant purchases of U.S. agricultural products to signal its willingness to make good on the concessions it made. Glickman said U.S. farmers risk losing

sales to Europe, Canada, Australia and Argentina if Congress does not approve the China trade deal. In addition to lowering its restrictions on wheat, China also agreed to reduce tariffs on a host of farm products, including beef, oranges, grapes, wine, cheese and poultry. The tariff on beef alone would drop from 45 percent to 12 percent. The Agriculture Department claims sales of farm products to China could triple to \$3 billion annually under terms of the agreement. "The sale of wheat to China from the Pacific Northwest is a significant breakthrough for the U.S. wheat industry and we hope it is just the beginning of a new relationship with this potentially multimillion-ton wheat market," said Alan Tracy, president of U.S. Wheat Associates, the industry's export arm. The purchase includes 30,000 tons of soft white wheat, 10,000 tons of hard red spring wheat and 10,000 tons of hard red winter wheat

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Correction

There was error in the February 23, 2000 issue of The Portland Observer. Lois Johnson-Williams was the first African American to join the Rose Festival court. She had represented Monroe High School in 1967. Robin Marks was the first Black Queen of Rosaria in 1980.

Weather

Through the weekend

Today		52°F/10°C	Friday		55°F/13°C
Some rain		41°F/5°C	Frequent showers		43°F/6°C
Thursday		52°F/11°C	Saturday		55°F/13°C
Partly cloudy		41°F/5°C	Morning rain		39°F/4°C
			Sunday		56°F/13°C
			Showers		39°F/4°C

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This Week in History

On March 3, 1991, in a case that sparked a national outcry, motorist Rodney King was severely beaten by Los Angeles police officers in a scene captured on amateur video.
 On March 4, 1933, the start of President Roosevelt's first administration brought with it the first woman to serve in the Cabinet: Labor Secretary Frances Perkins.
 On March 6, 1857, in its Dred Scott decision, the Supreme Court held that Scott, a slave, could not sue for his freedom in a federal court.