

## Bringing Affordable and Eco-Friendly Housing to Portlanders

By JOY RAMOS/PORTLAND OBSERVER

Rosemarie Cordello is a trailblazer in the nation for combining environmentally-friendly design and construction with affordable housing initiatives. The interest

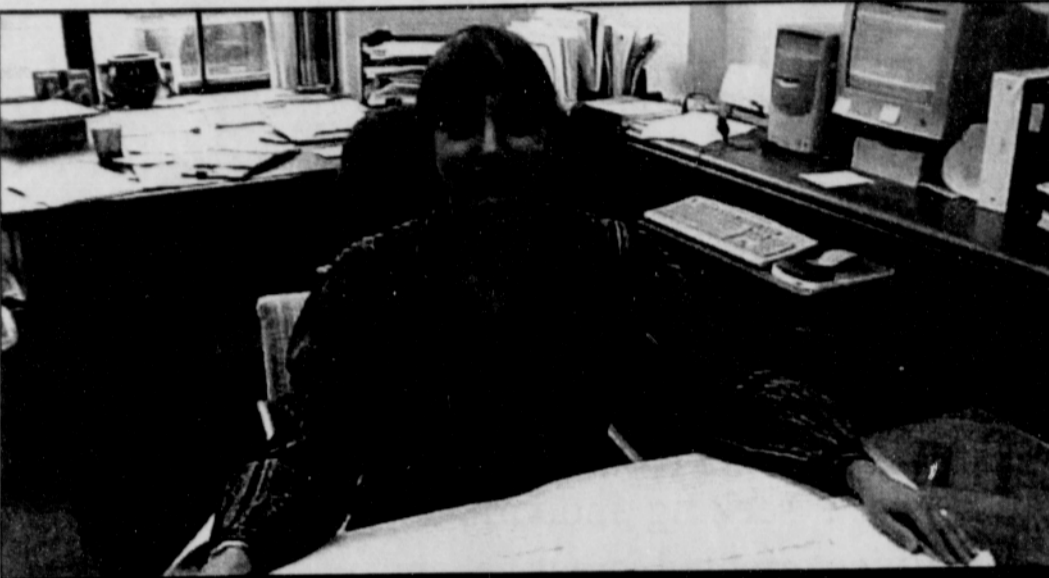
and participation of others helped launch Sustainable Communities Northwest as a nonprofit in 1997. "We are the only organization that is an affordable housing provider with a focus on sustainable building and sustainable development. What that means is that we co-develop with other nonprofit developers of affordable housing," she explained.

Introducing sustainable, green building at a time when there was little support for such groundbreaking work was challenging. She proved successful by putting her three loves to practical use: having worked as a lawyer representing low and moderate income folks in discrimination and liability; a longtime interest actively buying, selling and "rehabbing" houses in inner city Portland; and past work volunteering out of environmental concern.

Sustainable Communities Northwest addresses three particular areas of concern: A lack of affordable housing for low-income families in Portland. The fact that typical housing takes an enormous toll on environmental and human

health - with adequate weatherization and wasted energy, poor water management, off-gassing from toxic interior finishes, and the waste of tons of salvageable

ecological measures to improve the quality of the building, promoting community life was emphasized by design. They created a large garden for the tenants to grow food using



Rosemarie Cordello founded Sustainable Communities Northwest with the mission of promoting ecologically, economically and socially sound urban communities through affordable housing development in the greater Portland area.

building materials. Housing development often ignores long-term community development and land use priorities, with over-sized dwellings, automobile-oriented siting and design, and destruction of green spaces.

One of the first projects attempted by Sustainable Communities Northwest was a 15-unit apartment building in Outer Southeast Portland which was later renamed to Johnson Creek Commons. "We partnered with Rose Community Development. It's a nonprofit in that part of town that provides affordable housing."

Innovative steps at improving the run-down building were taken that did not cost more when compared with traditional building and remodeling costs. "We drastically improved the energy efficiency of the building.

It was built in ways to reduce waste. We put in more energy-efficient appliances, particularly refrigerators." Besides taking

permaculture techniques. They went so far as to consult with tenants about their needs and vision of communal living. Bartering was another project introduced with the intent of getting people to rely on each other as much as possible.

The end result after finishing work on the Johnson Creek Commons was a model building with lower rent to boot. For those who make 50% of the average annual income in Portland that live in 2-bedroom apartment, rent is \$500 per month. Below that category are the tenants who are charged only \$275 per month for a 2-bedroom if they are at 30% of the average annual income for the area.

Cordello is currently working on two other projects that are also in Outer Southeast. "It's an area that is underserved with affordable housing and also underserved by nonprofit developers. Affordable housing is badly needed there," she commented.

# PACIFIC POWER

Pacific Power a Division of Pacificorp

Joins with

The Portland Observer

in Celebrating

Minority Business Development week.

Let us take time to honor the energy, determination, and optimism of our state's minority entrepreneurs. Pacificorp believes that support of the Enterprise Zone can be an integral part of the development of an economically strong and livable community.

*"Together We Will Succeed"*

# Minority Business Week

A time to reflect on our achievements of the past and commit to our progress in the future, as a community.

Little Chapel of the Chimes

Funeral Home

had already been

supporting the families of Portland

After 85 years, our

commitment to the

families of our community

continues. We are here

in times of need, just as

we always have been.

It is a responsibility that

we honor. It is our reason

for being.

A HISTORY of SERVICE.

A tradition that continues.

The Little Chapel of the Chimes

430 N. Killingsworth Street  
Portland, Oregon 97217-2499

Tel.: 503.283.1976 Fax: 503.283.1979

A PROUD HERITAGE OF SERVICE SINCE 1912

## MUSIC MILLENNIUM



BRINGING YOU THE BEST IN RECORDED MUSIC SINCE 1969

## MUSIC MILLENNIUM SUPPORTS MINORITY BUSINESSES

Featuring an extensive selection of HIP-HOP • ROCK • SOUL • OLDIES • JAZZ • SOUNDTRACKS • DANCE • CLASSICAL • ELECTRONICA • RAP • WORLD • BLUES • COMEDY • REGGAE AND MORE!

Special orders on import & domestic titles. We buy used CDs, cassettes & albums.

East Portland  
32nd & E. Burnside  
231-8926

MUSIC MILLENNIUM  
www.musicmillennium.com

NW Portland  
23rd & Johnson  
248-0163