

# County Responds to Lead Poisoning Risks

The Multnomah County Health Department has sent letters to local area pediatricians, encouraging them to recognize lead poisoning as a serious risk to children and to conduct blood testing and preventative education for their patients at risk.

The mailing was in response to a recent study conducted by the Health Department, which showed a high prevalence of lead hazards in many Portland-area homes.

In addition, the EPA recently announced new, more stringent national standards to identify dangerous levels of lead in paint, dust, and soil. These standards are even more protective than those used for the county's study. For the first time, parents, landlords, and childcare providers will have specific levels on which to make informed decisions regarding lead found in their homes, yards, or play areas.

The Health Department study found

that 71 percent of homes in North and inner-Northeast and Southeast neighborhoods had household dust that contained lead exceeding the federal standards. Twenty-one percent of these homes had yard soil that contained lead above the federal standard.

"Even a low level of lead exposure can damage the brain and nervous system, causing learning disabilities, hearing loss, speech and behavioral problems, and other serious health effects," states

Lillian Shirley, Multnomah County Health Department Director.

The Centers for Disease Control estimates that nearly one million American children under the age of six have dangerously elevated levels of lead in their blood. The Health Department study suggests that thousands of children living in Multnomah County are at risk of lead poisoning due to dangerous levels of lead in their homes.

To learn more about the County's Lead

Prevalence Study, the EPA's new standards, childhood lead poisoning prevention, and information on local lead programs and services, call the Multnomah County Health Department's LeadLine at 503-988-4000. Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese interpreters are available as needed. The Lead Poisoning Prevention Program is funded through a partnership with the City of Portland Water Bureau and Bureau of Housing and Community Development.

# The Portland Obs.

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Portland kids involved in a local bicycling group surround the legendary runner Alberto Salazar during the dedication of the Lance Armstrong Fitness Center on the Nike campus. The kids also got a chance to meet Armstrong, the Tour de France bicycling champion.

## BIKE Meets Tour deFrance Winner

The kids of B.I.K.E., a Portland nonprofit group that uses bicycles to help inner-city kids develop life skills, met the current Tour de France Champion while attending the dedication of the Lance Armstrong Fitness Center on the Nike campus.

At the invitation of the Nike Foundation, about 20 children traveled to Nike's World Headquarters in Beaverton for the event.

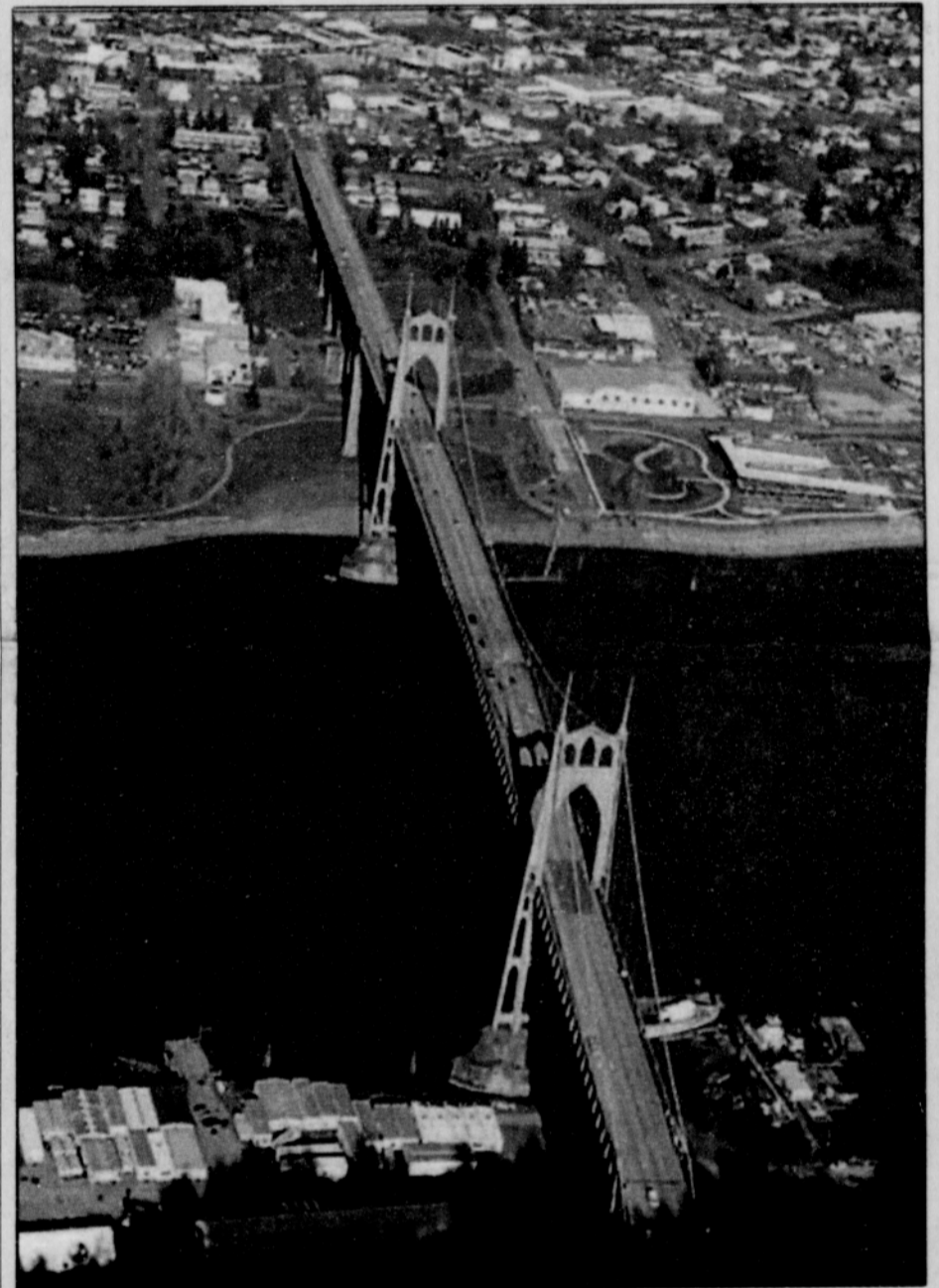
Just minutes after arriving on campus, the kids met former world class marathon

runner Alberto Salazar, who was also on hand for the dedication. Salazar spent time talking with all the kids before they headed to the Mia Hamm cafeteria for a free lunch.

Nike executive Howard White and CEO Phil Knight warmed up the crowd with words of praise for Armstrong and his accomplishments. The kids were then treated to an inspirational—and sometimes tearful—speech by Armstrong, a man who beat cancer and returned to cycling to win

the world's toughest bike race in both 1999 and 2000. After the speech, the children had a chance to shake Armstrong's hand and soak up some of the two-time Tour de France champ's hearty spirit. Armstrong also signed autographs on magazine covers and on the yellow jerseys that many of the children wore to the event. The once-in-a-lifetime opportunity ended with a personalized tour of the new Lance Armstrong Fitness Center.

## St. Johns Bridge Due For Major Repairs



An aerial view shows the St. Johns Bridge and the surrounding landscape.

A Traffic Management Plan that calls for nighttime closures and restricted one-lane day traffic has been outlined for the St. Johns Bridge Rehabilitation Project.

Construction on the bridge is expected to begin in early summer 2002, and continue through fall 2004.

The Oregon Department of Transportation must entirely replace the concrete deck and sidewalks, upgrade the bridge drainage and lighting systems, and improve the Bridge Avenue ramps on the west side of the Willamette River.

The bridge will also have to be encapsulated to prevent environmental contamination while rust and lead-based paint are removed and new lead-free, corrosion-inhibiting paint is applied to the bridge's metal parts.

ODOT and city of Portland traffic

engineers and representatives of TriMet, the Port of Portland and the St. Johns and Linnton communities have been involved in a Technical Advisory Committee to help develop the plan for managing traffic during construction.

The committee recently recommended that bridge traffic be reduced to one eastbound and one westbound travel lane during the day, with full nighttime closure during the deck replacement.

This phase of construction is expected to take approximately eight months to complete. The committee recommended that two travel lanes be kept open 24-hours-a-day for the remainder of the approximately two-year project.

About 125 people attended an open house to review the plans last week.

## Old Farmer's Almanac (Almost) Predicted Quake

The venerable Old Farmer's Almanac was just one day off from predicting the 6.8 magnitude earthquake that rocked the Pacific Northwest Wednesday, Feb. 28.

According to the book's 2001 edition calendar, the possibility of seismic activity was high on Feb 26 and 27 because the moon was on the celestial equator, a line at 0 degree declination that separates the northern and southern celestial hemispheres.

"But what they often overlook is how the moon can effect the land. Different positions of the moon can often cause lifting and shifting of the Earth's crust to a significant degree, thus causing seismic activity. Perhaps, one day, by using this and other scientific methods, warning will be available before a large, devastating quake occurs."

## Urban Landscape to Grow



Eva Hallvik and Paul Weingardner celebrate after planting a tree in the King neighborhood. Thanks to Friends of Trees and many other hard-working volunteers, 128 trees have been planted in recent days in both the King and Humboldt neighborhoods.

tal Tuesday, a day after undergoing a surgical procedure to repair a damaged artery.

The vice president walked out of George Washington University Hospital, shook hands with his doctors and was driven away. "Good," he said in response to a reporter's shouted question about how he felt.

### Aftershock Hits Northwest

SEATTLE — A powerful earthquake rocked the Northwest, shattering windows, showering bricks onto sidewalks and injuring at least 250 people. A 3.4-magnitude aftershock caused no further damage.

### Bush Sends Congress \$2 Trillion Budget

WASHINGTON — President Bush sent Congress a \$1.96 trillion budget that would curtail spending in programs ranging from farm aid to transportation while using ballooning surpluses to provide Americans with a \$1.6 trillion tax cut over 10 years.

### Russia, Vietnam Expand Strategic Ties

HANOI, Vietnam — The leaders of Russia and Vietnam signed a deal expanding strategic ties, a move that reunites Hanoi with its one-time commu-

nist benefactor and gives Moscow its strongest ally in Southeast Asia. Vladimir Putin's visit, the first by a Russian or Soviet leader despite a half-century of diplomatic ties, was lauded by Vietnamese leaders and the state-controlled press.

### Greenspan Says Slowdown Not Over Yet

WASHINGTON — Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, delivering a sober assessment of the U.S. economy, told Congress that the sharp slowdown that began in the second half of last year "has yet to run its full course." Greenspan's comments sent a clear signal that the Fed is

ready to do more to prevent the faltering economy from skidding into a recession.

### Livestock Virus Causes Countryside Panic in Britain

LONDON — Britain awoke to headlines proclaiming "panic" and "chaos" in a countryside crippled by the livestock virus. Cases of the highly contagious disease have climbed from seven to 12 to 18. Britain extended a ban on livestock movements for two more weeks, and the European Union lengthened its ban on British exports of live animals, meat and dairy products.

## THE WEEK IN REVIEW

### Cheney Leaves Hospital Tuesday, Feels 'Good'

WASHINGTON — Vice President Dick Cheney was released from the hospi-