



Business

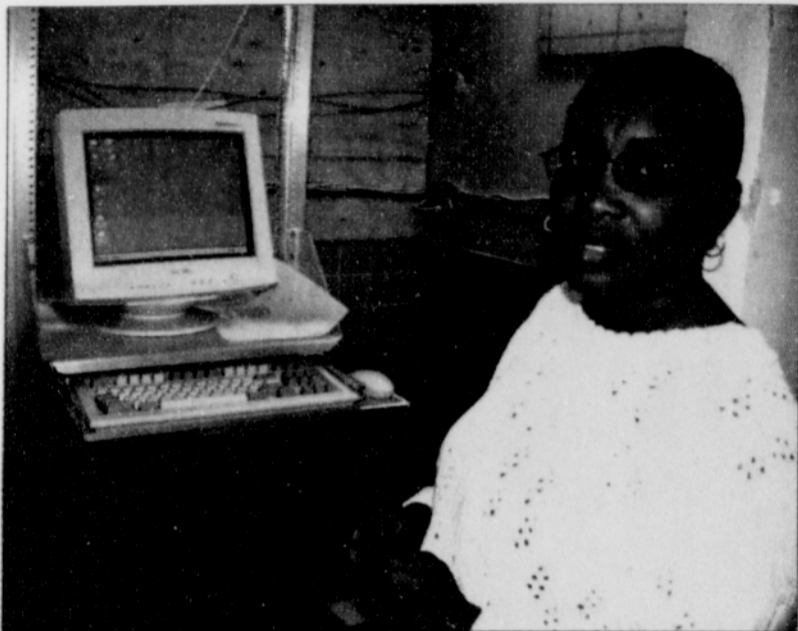
Computer Upgrade Puts Urban League Back on Track

The Urban League of Portland has completed a major upgrade of a computer system to help it expand services to the public and correct recordkeeping errors that in the past had put the agency in financial trouble.

"Our old system crashed two years ago and that was part of the problem," said Urban League executive Patrick Schwab. "When funding agencies asked for financial and program information, the league simply did not have the technology to answer the questions efficiently."

Now, thanks to significant help from several area businesses and organizations, the Urban League has the latest accounting software for financial data, a computer system to track programs, and outstanding staff to support the technology.

Intel donated \$50,000 to help underwrite the costs of a new information technology infrastructure and financial database soft-



Charmaine Rhoden, a student intern from Portland Community College, checks a powerful new computer server and internet connecting system at the Urban League of Portland.

(PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEIGHTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER)

ware to support both current and long-term operating goals. Hewlett Packard matched Intel's support by donating desktop systems and

ordering a significant discount on network equipment.

The League also received in-kind support from Portland Com-

munity College students and the Oregon National Guard. Volunteers donated more than 500 hours toward the design and installation of the League's new technology infrastructure over the last three months.

"Our new technology system is a milestone in the Urban League's effort to re-establish its position as an effective community resource," said Margaret Carter, President and CEO of the League. "We are grateful for the collaborative efforts of business leaders, community leaders and students to get this job done."

The new data infrastructure includes more than twenty new computers, a heavy-duty network server, four laser printers and more than 6,000 feet of network cable. The Oregon National Guard helped design the network and the central wiring closet. Urban League staff and PCC students drilled dozens of holes in the 100-year-old Urban League building to pull thousands of feet of cable.

Airport to Fix Columbia Slough Waste Problem

Sens. Gordon Smith, R-Ore. and Ron Wyden, D-Ore., announced that the Portland International Airport will receive \$8.5 million for the construction of a holding tank that will capture materials used to de-ice planes and runways.

Currently, materials used in the de-icing process combine with stormwater and drain into the Columbia Slough. An additional \$5.9 million will be made available for the improvement of a runway and the installation of low visibility lights at the airport.

"These funds will allow PDX and the Port of Portland to implement strict environmental practices without sacrificing the safety of airline passengers," said Smith. "Because of the Port's efforts, the Columbia River will be safer, cleaner and more hos-

pitable to salmon and people alike."

"Finding new situations to the problem of de-icing runoff is essential to maintaining the safety of PDX passengers and the integrity of the Columbia River," Wyden said. "These funds will provide the airport and the Port of Portland with the means to facilitate both. It's a win-win situation for the community and the environment."

The material used for de-icing will be released from the storage tank into City of Portland sewer system for treatment. It will then be trucked to alternative locations for treatment or recycling. With the new system in place, most of the material used to de-ice planes and runways will no longer drain into the Columbia River.

Seniors Eye Vouchers for Farmers Markets

An estimated 15,000 Oregonians are expected to take part in a new state program to help seniors buy fresh produce at farmers markets.

"This is innovative way to put more fresh fruit and vegetables into the diet of older Oregonians and at the same time support our state's farmers," says Jeff Miller of the Senior and Disabled Services Division of the Oregon Department of Human Ser-

vices.

Funded by a \$1.5 million federal grant, the program will distribute vouchers to low-income Oregon seniors for exclusive use at participating farmers markets.

State officials expect to hand out vouchers to 15,000 people on a first come first-served basis beginning May 15. There is a limit of \$100 in vouchers per household and the benefit can only be used between June 1 and Oct. 28.

To qualify, an individual must be 65 or older, earn no more than \$11,592 annually, and receive services through the Older Americans Act or the Senior and Disabled Services Division. For more information, call 503-945-6410.

Public Utility Chair Booted

(AP) - An annoyed Gov. John Kitzhaber announced he's ending the term of Public Utility Commission Chairman Ron Eachus earlier than planned, in part because of less-than-flattering comments Eachus made about the governor in a recent interview.

Kitzhaber announced that instead of serving until the end of the year, Eachus will leave the commission as soon as Roy Hemmingway is confirmed by the Senate as a commissioner.

Eachus had sharply criticized Kitzhaber since the governor announced on April 10 he would not

reappoint him to the utility-regulating panel on which he has served for 14 years. Eachus said Kitzhaber's action "lacked courtesy and class and perhaps some courage."

"I think it was because we are too independent, too visible and as such perhaps too troublesome for the governor to consider us one of his own," Eachus told the Statesman Journal after Kitzhaber failed to reappoint him to the PUC.

In a letter to Eachus released last week, the governor told him he had been the panel's greatest asset but also "its greatest liability as well."

UPS Offers Career Training

United Parcel Service has teamed up with Portland Public Schools, Portland Community College, the Portland Area Career Training Center and the Alternative Pathways Program to offer the UPS Earn and Learn Program to Portland-area high school students.

The program gives high school students the opportunity to work part-time at UPS while attending high school and taking up to four college-level

courses at Portland Community College courtesy of UPS. Once the students have graduated high school, they are eligible to continue to work part-time at UPS, attend college and earn up to \$23,000 in college tuition reimbursement.

To learn more about the PPS-UPS Education Partnership, call Kathy Treves, PPS Business Partnerships manager, at 503-281-0668.

Survey Puts Portland First in Recycling

(AP) - A national publication has rated Portland as the top recycler among the nation's 30 largest cities.

Portland has a recycling rate of 53.6 percent, four tenths of a percent below the 54 percent rate it set as its recycling goal for 2000. The city's office of sustainable development is outlining

a proposal to meet the goal of a 60-percent recycling rate by 2005.

Under consideration for future improvements are diverting food waste and other organics from the landfill, working with neighborhoods that have low recycling rates, and outreach programs with businesses.

Neil Kelly Awards Luncheon Friday

The North-Northeast Business Association and the Rotary Club of Albina are joining in sponsorship of the 14th Annual Excellence in Business and Neil Kelly Day Awards Luncheon Friday, May 11th at 11:30 a.m. at Shenanigan's Restaurant on Swan Island.

The joint sponsorship is a first for

the two organizations and consolidates their ongoing tribute to the life of the late remodeling contractor Neil Kelly. The Portland businessman developed a thriving business in the heart of Albina and dedicated himself to improving opportunities, particularly for youth in his beloved inner city neighborhood.

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