

# Police News

## State's Drug Courts Mark 10 Years

Judges, legislators and public officials recently gathered at the state capitol to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Oregon's drug courts, an innovative judicial effort that has reduced crime, saved money and built stronger communities.

"Oregon's drug courts have made a tremendous difference not only in the lives of thousands of Oregonians, but also to Americans across the country," said Wallace P. Carson Jr., chief justice of the Oregon Supreme Court. "Our state was a pioneer in promoting this novel idea which has been adopted by all 50 states."

Oregon's 15 drug courts offer drug offenders in 13 counties including Multnomah a chance to stay out of jail, get help for their addictions, and avoid a criminal record. To be eligible for drug court, participants must plead qual-

ity, admit an addiction problem and agree to a year of participation. Those who complete the program have their arrest record expunged, while those who fail are convicted of felony drug possession.

Oregon's first drug court, and the second of its kind in the United States, was established in Multnomah County in 1991. Others have followed in Clackamas, Crook, Douglas, Jefferson, Josephine, Klamath, Lane, Malheur, Marion, Union, Wallowa, and Yamhill Counties. More than 1,000 other drug courts are now in operation or planned nationwide.

"Drug courts are one of the best tools we have to fight crime," said Oregon House Speaker Mark Simmons, R-Elgin. "The record shows that drug courts can have a dramatic effect on recidivism."

Simmons cited a 1998 study of Multnomah County's drug court

that found that graduates had 76 percent fewer subsequent arrests, 80 percent fewer serious felony

otherwise be spent on law enforcement and human services."

According to figures prepared by Mink's agency, the average annual treatment cost for a drug court participant in Oregon is \$2,195. A recent survey found that to put a drug felon in county jail for a year costs between \$21,170 and \$37,595.

Circuit Judge Darryl Larson, who presides over Lane County's drug court, said the program does more than curb crime and save tax money.

"Alcohol and drug abuse destroys families and neighborhoods. By helping people end their dependence, we build stronger, safer communities," Larson said.

**'Oregon's drug courts have made a tremendous difference not only in the lives of thousands of Oregonians, but also to Americans across the country,' — Oregon Supreme Court Chief Justice Wallace P. Carson Jr.**

arrests, and 85 percent fewer subsequent drug arrests.

"Drug courts are also one of the best bargains available to Oregon taxpayers," said Bobby S. Mink, director of the Oregon Department of Human Services. "They not only free up expensive jail space, but they also save money that would

## Murder Suspect Eludes Police

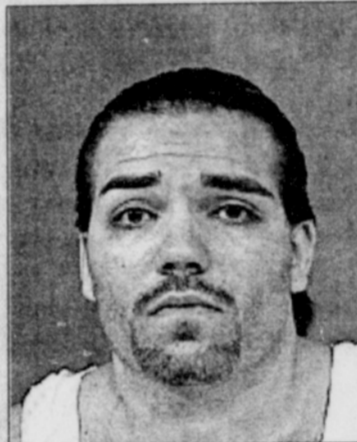
The Lake Oswego Police Department and the Multnomah County Major Crime Team, in cooperation with Crime Stoppers, are asking for your help in locating and apprehending Marcus Kelo Orozco.

A felony arrest warrant is on file charging Orozco with aggravated murder, robbery, burglary and being a felon in the possession of a firearm.

He is wanted for the murder of Josh L. Toomey that took place on Feb. 12 in Lake Oswego. Detectives have already arrested Damien Deshawn Douglas in connection with the case, which is believed to be drug related.

Orozco is a 26-year-old Hispanic male with a date of birth of Sept. 26, 1974. He is described as 5'7" tall, weighing 175 pounds, with black hair and brown eyes. Orozco should be considered armed and dangerous.

Crime Stoppers is offering a cash reward of up to \$1,000 for information, reported to Crime Stoppers, which leads to an arrest in this case, or any unsolved felony crime, and you can remain anonymous. Call Crime Stoppers at 503-823-HELP.



Marcus Kelo Orozco

## Forgeries Found on Medical Marijuana Card

State officials have suspended three registration cards to use marijuana for medical reasons after discovering the physicians' signature on their applications was forged.

"There's no room for fraud in the state's medical marijuana program," said Grant Higgins, M.D., acting administrator of the Health Division of the Oregon Department of Human Services.

"We have a zero tolerance policy on deception and we have started a comprehensive review of all aspects of the program."

Higginson said this is the first time registration cards issued under Oregon's Medical Marijuana Act had been suspended.

One of the cards was on April 19, the other two on May 2, after Health Division staff discovered the necessary physician's signature had been forged.

Higginson said his office had rejected four other applications for the program for the same reason.

"While we're pleased we caught four of these fraudulent applications in time, we should never have issued the three cards we suspended on April 19, the other two on May 2, after Health Division staff discovered the necessary physician's signature had been forged.

Higginson said his office had rejected four other applications for the program for the same reason.

"While we're pleased we caught four of these fraudulent applications in time, we should never have issued the three cards we suspended," said Higginson.

Health Division staff are required to confirm the signature of the doctor who signs an application for a medical marijuana registration card. This is done with a telephone call or letter.

All of the forgery cases involve the signature of the same doctor, and this physi-

cian had asked Health Division staff not to call for verification unless the signature on the forms didn't match the previous ones, according to Higginson.

"Unfortunately, staff accepted this suggestion and stopped confirming the doctor's signature by phone,"

he said.

"Three medical marijuana registration cards were issued inappropriately because we failed to follow established procedures," said Higginson. "We are taking corrective steps to make certain this doesn't happen again."

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