

Portland **Business** Observer

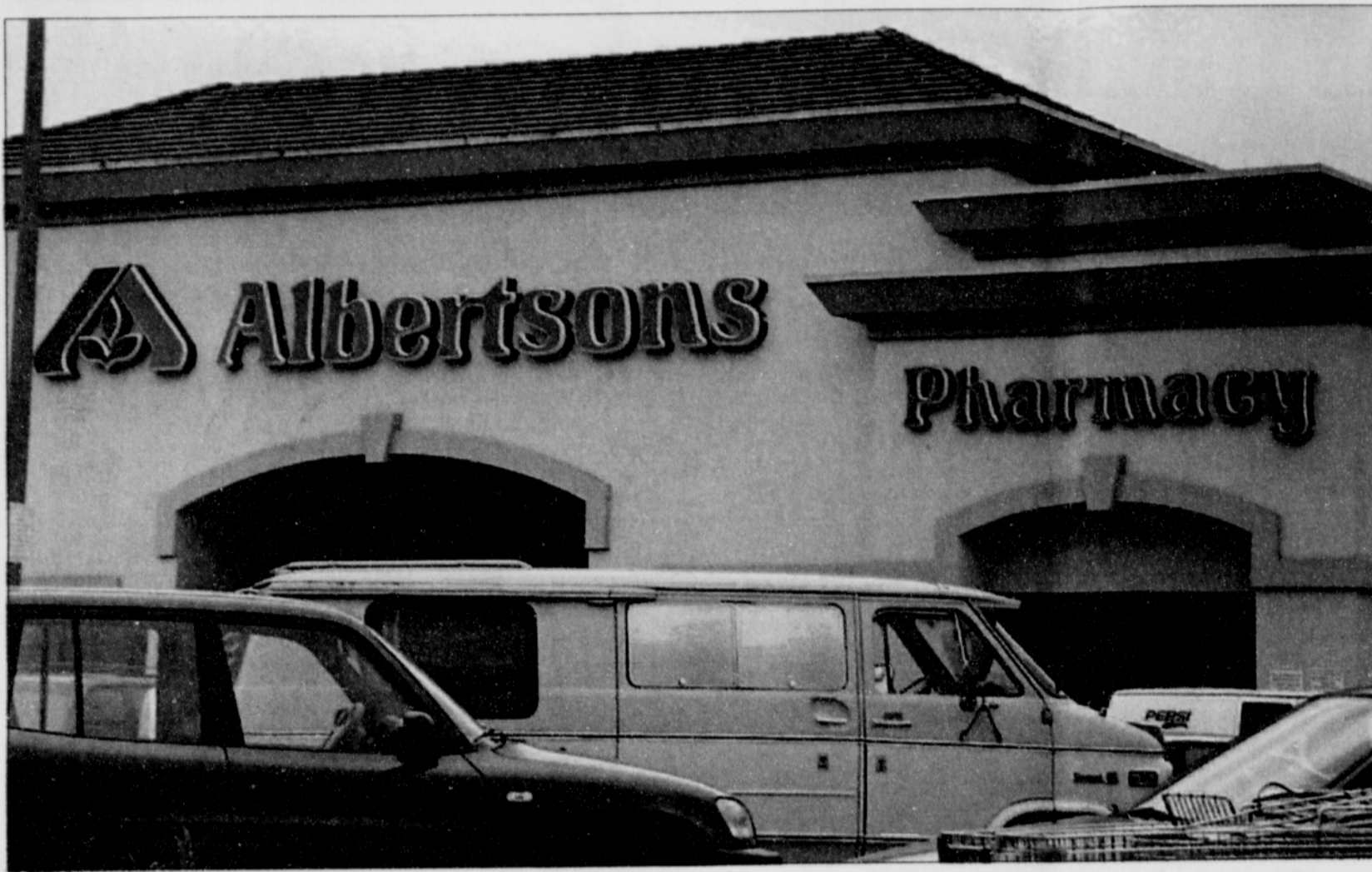


PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Albertsons plans to close about 165 stores nationwide, but there's no word on the fate of its Portland area stores.

## Albertson's Closes 165 Stores

(AP) — Supermarket giant Albertson's will close about 165 stores in 25 states and eliminate up to 20 percent of managerial and administrative jobs above the store level, the company announced last week. The cuts are aimed at reducing operating costs as the nation's second-largest food and drug retailer continues to struggle with its 1999 acquisition of American

Stores, its new chairman and chief executive said.

"The major actions announced today are just the first in a series of long-overdue steps that are necessary to begin unleashing the vast potential of this company," Larry Johnston said in a statement.

The American Stores acquisition more than doubled the number of Albertson's-owned outlets to more

than 2,500 in 36 states. Difficulty integrating the operations led to the April hiring of Johnston, a former General Electric Co. senior executive with a reputation for consolidating businesses.

Albertson's said it would offer voluntary separation to longtime administrative and managerial personnel with a severance package that includes job placement services.

It was not immediately clear how many jobs would be eliminated, or what stores are being closed.

## Long Wait for Cable Customers Results in Fine

(AP) — Too many callers to AT&T Broadband in Vancouver have spent too much time on hold, and now it's going to cost the cable company \$65,000.

AT&T will not appeal the decision by the City-County Cable Television Commission, said Deborah Luppold, the cable company's regional vice president.

"The commission has been very patient with the company as we've made progress in this period of transition," she said. "We believe it's in the best interest of the company to put this behind us and move forward."

Most of the money will go to AT&T customers, who will get \$1 off their bill within the next 60 days. The city of Vancouver and Clark County will split \$10,000 to pay for staff time dealing with AT&T's upset customers.

AT&T acquired Clark

County's cable franchise when it bought TCI in 1999. Its agreement with the commission requires that it answer 90 percent of customer calls within 30 seconds. But last year, customers were frequently spending 20 minutes or longer on hold.

In December, the commission determined that AT&T was not complying with the franchise agreement, but delayed a fine to see if service would improve. It did for most of this year, but commission Director Donna Mason said service has been "abysmal" in the last week after AT&T laid off 100 workers at its Beaverton call center.

Spot checks by commission staff found waits of 30 minutes, and one woman spent two hours on hold, Mason said. If performance doesn't improve immediately, AT&T will face more penalties, she said.

## Habitat Housing Draws Corporate Support

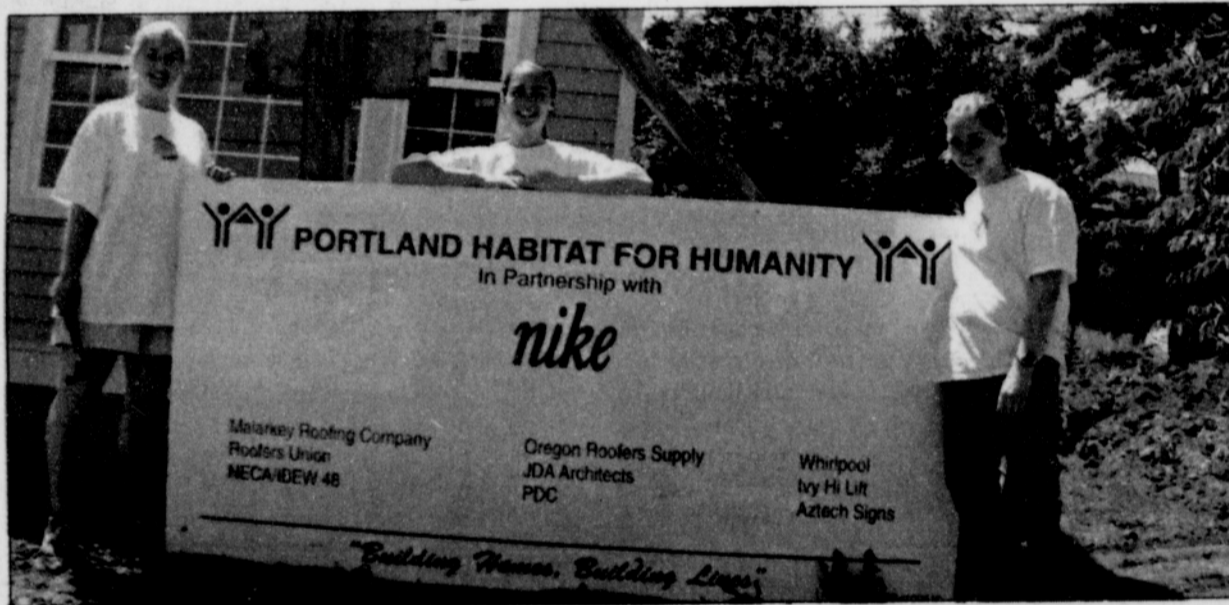


PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Construction volunteers Miffy Weller-Jones (from left) Stefanie Keldsen and Emily Chamberlin of Nike, Inc. are all smiles after completing work on a new Habitat for Humanity home in the Rosemont-Villa St. Rose development on North Dekum. Nike generously donated \$60,000 and part of its labor pool of 1,300 employees to help build the house.

## Safeway Boycotts Pictsweet Mushrooms

(AP) — For the second time in a month, a major grocery chain has said it will boycott Pictsweet mushrooms in support of union activists.

Safeway Inc. said last week that it will no longer carry Pictsweet mushrooms at its Oregon and southwest Washington stores.

Company spokeswoman Bridget Flanagan would not elaborate on the company's reasons.

Union organizers with Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United have been pressing for better working conditions at the Pictsweet farms for several months.

Fred Meyer Inc., another major grocery chain, said July 3 it would boycott Pictsweet mushrooms at its stores. Fred Meyer, which accounted for 15 percent of the Salem farm's business, joined the boycott after Salem Mayor Mike

Swaim pleaded the union's case.

"This is another major step forward," said Erik Nicholson, a union organizer who says the action will increase pressure on Pictsweet.

Safeway has 113 stores in its Portland division, while Fred Meyer has more than 120 stores in five Western states.

Pictsweet told employees last month that Fred Meyer's boycott was the primary cause for planned layoffs of about 50 of its 300 to 400 employees. A notice issued to employees stated that job cuts would begin soon, but no workers had lost their jobs.

Nicholson said workers backing PCUN knew going in that the boycott could mean layoffs.

Officials at Albertson's Inc. have so far rebuffed the union's requests to pull Pictsweet mushrooms.

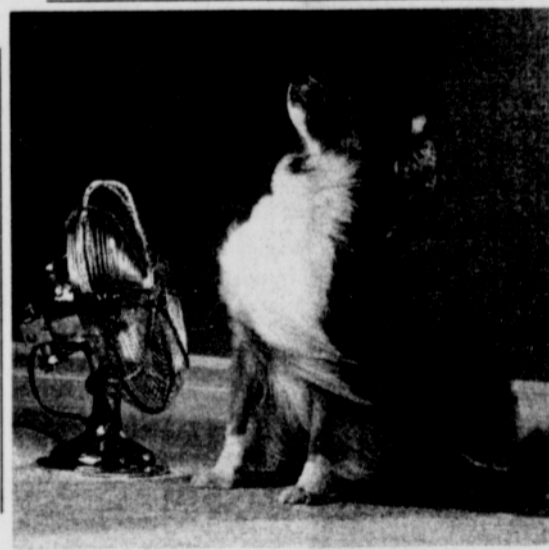
### Richland Boat Rentals & Guide Service

Some of the boat we have at this time:

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- 14' Starcraft holds 4 avr adults Cost \$50.00 Per Day
- 14' Gregor holds 3 avr adults \$50.00 Per Day

Richland Boat Rentals docks at Hewitt Park in Richland Or. and serves the Powder River Arm of Brownlee Res. We are offering guided trips for crappie, bluegill, catfish and perch. Feel free to give us a call for up to date fishing conditions or for a guided trip or boat rental. For more information call 1-541-893-6014. Will return all calls.

## Be creative.



### Air conditioning isn't the only way to keep cool.

A little creative problem solving can go a long way to keep everyone, including household pets, comfortable this summer while holding energy costs down. A few strategically located fans can take a serious load off your air conditioning system. Dinner off the outdoor grill (or from the microwave) will use less power and save you again by not heating up the kitchen. Conserving energy during this crunch can save you dollars and help us be resourceful with everyone's supply. Here are some tips for you to consider. Give it some thought - you might have a few tricks of your own.

- Keep doors, windows and window coverings closed during the hottest part of the day. Open windows to let in the cool morning and evening air.
- Use portable fans to stay cool instead of large air conditioning systems when outdoor temperature is below 90°F.
- If you will be away from home for more than a few days, unplug TVs, VCRs and computers as they draw power even when not in use.
- Use microwaves or outdoor grills instead of ovens.
- Use a programmable thermostat and set to 78°F or higher as comfort and health allow.
- Wait 'til late to use electricity. Avoid using your dishwasher and washer/dryer during summer peak hours of 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. Run only full loads.
- Make saving energy a habit.

Do the bright thing. Call us at 1-800-222-4335, and ask for a copy of our Bright Ideas booklet.



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