

Oregon Workplaces Go Smokefree in 2002

On Jan. 1, more Oregonians will be protected from second-hand smoke on the job as a result of Oregon's new Smokefree Workplace Law.

State officials say the action will save thousands of lives and millions of dollars.

Oregon is one of the first states in the nation to adopt a smokefree workplace law. Washington, California and Maryland also have laws prohibiting smoking in the workplace.

"All Oregonians stand to benefit from the new law in many ways," said Oregon State epidemiologist, Dr. Mel Kohn. "The vast majority of employees will be spared from breathing the more than 4,000 chemicals, including 40 cancer-causing agents, found in secondhand smoke."

Officials say the legislation protects 95 percent of Oregon's workforce from the poisonous toxins associated with second-hand tobacco smoke on the job. In addition, employers are also said to benefit because smokefree workplaces are proven to promote a healthier workforce with fewer sick days.

"For Oregon's business community, smokefree environments can result in lower health care costs and even cut down wear and tear on office equipment, carpets and furniture," said Kohn. "Plus more than 79 percent of Oregonians are not smokers so customers should have little problem adapting to the new law."

The new law requires nearly all employers to ensure their workplaces are smokefree and display "No Smoking" signs. Exceptions are made only for bars and taverns, bingo parlors, tobacco stores, bowling centers and hotel and motel rooms designated as smoking rooms.

State officials report that most employers in Oregon have already adopted a voluntary smokefree policy in the interest of their employees' health concerns. For those employers, few if any changes are necessary to comply with the new law.



Market Opening Helps Fund Portland Urban League

To celebrate last month's opening of a new store on Northeast 33rd and Killingsworth in the Concordia neighborhood, New Seasons Market sold house-made sausage and vegetarian chili at a store barbecue and donated all proceeds to the Urban League of Portland. The event raised \$1,500.

"This benefit was awesome," said Alison Montag of New Seasons Market. "It was a great opportunity to get to know our new neighbors and welcome everyone to the store."

Urban League President and CEO and Oregon State Sen. Margaret Carter was on hand to assist with the benefit and greet community members.

"We've been waiting a long time for this grocery store," she said. "We're so excited to have such a responsive partner and friend in the neighborhood."

Margaret Carter, executive director of the Urban League of Portland and Brian Rohter, president of New Seasons Market at Northeast 33rd and Killingsworth, welcome area residents during the store's grand opening.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

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Pay Stations Wanted for Downtown

(AP) - Downtown shoppers and others may be able to leave their quarters at home if Portland's transportation department gets its way.

The department wants to install 900 solar-powered "pay stations" to replace parking meters.

The machines, which cost about \$6,000 each, are designed to replace a city block's worth of conventional parking meters.

The benefits include the stations accepting credit cards, jamming less often and phoning a central data bank when they're broken.

The downsides include that it's impossible to use someone else's leftover time and it may require walking as much as a block, and back, to pay for parking.

Transportation officials say they will ask the City Council this month to approve a contract for the pay station technology.

Zoo Birth Ushers in New Year



Gouda is a newborn addition to the Oregon Zoo.

(AP) - A rare Allen's swamp monkey born at the Oregon Zoo is ready to meet the public after a spate of cold weather kept the baby and its mother out of sight.

"The new baby is doing great," said Chris Pfefferkorn, zoological curator. "He is very alert, has a healthy appetite, and has actually been observed reaching out for food."

The male monkey, named Gouda, was born Nov. 23, but first shown off to the public on Friday. Only five other zoos in the nation are home to the endangered Allen's swamp monkey.

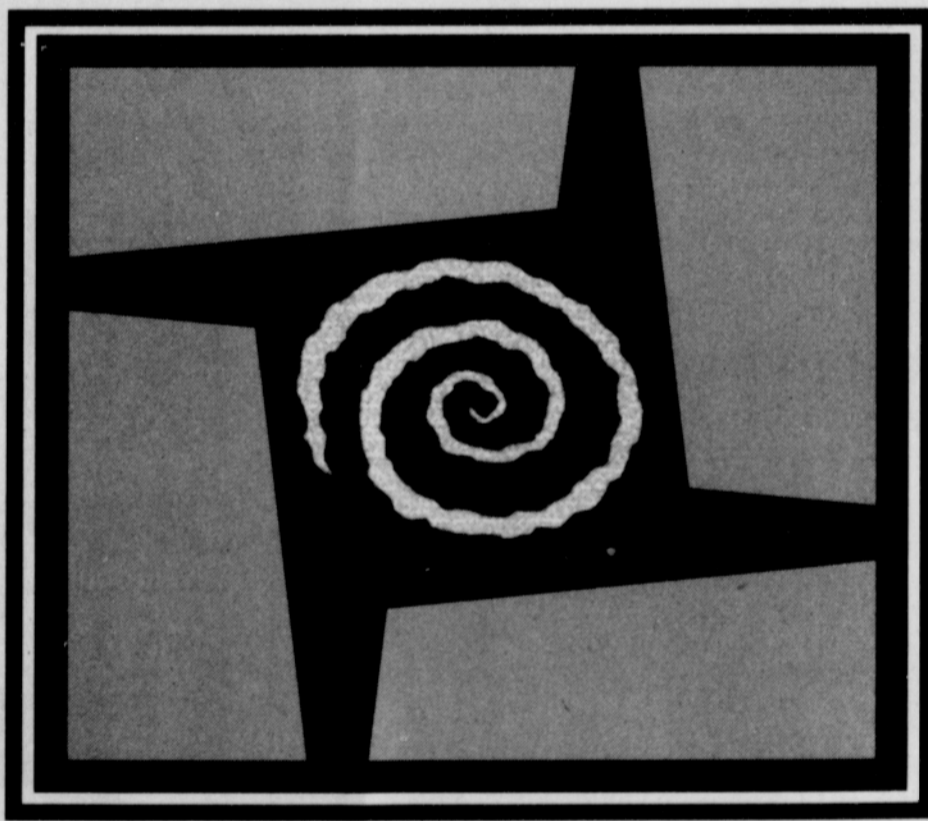
The new infant brings the zoo's swamp monkey population to six. He joins mother Dannon, 11, father Devon, 14, sisters Sweet Tilly, 3, and Brie, 1, as well as a 20-year-old monkey named Butterball. Gouda's parents, along with Butterball, came to the zoo in 1994 on breeding loan from the San Diego Zoo.

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