



BUSINESS & EDUCATION

Graduates Embark on Health Careers



Sharon Washington-Clark (from left) of the Providence Youth Academy joins students Ebony Jones and Maria Wagnetzky last Thursday during the school's first graduation ceremony. The academy is helping young adults overcome tremendous life challenges and secure jobs and a career in health care. Jones is pursuing a career in hospital admitting; Wagnetzky plans to become a pediatrician. Of the 20 first-year graduates, half have already secured jobs, Providence officials said.

PHOTO BY DAVE LAWTON



ART HOP

Upbeat on Alberta Street

Street performers draw the attention of two young boys Saturday during the third annual Art Hop on Northeast Alberta Street. The group Art on Alberta organized the parade and other festivities, including hands-on art projects, art exhibitions and live music.

PHOTO BY DAVID PLECHL/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Workshop for Shops on Interstate Avenue

Interstate Avenue businesses struggling to stay open during the Max light rail construction project can obtain some expert advice during a free workshop, Thursday, May 16 from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. in the Kaiser Permanente Town Hall conference rooms at 3704 N. Interstate Ave.

As part of the "Interstate Avenue is Open for Business" program, Tri-Met has joined with other sponsors to offer the "MAXimize Your Business" workshop geared specifically to issues small retail businesses face now, as well as preparation for potential new customers after the rail line opens in Sept. 2004.

Business experts from the University of Portland's Center for Entrepreneurship will mentor workshop attendees with one-on-one consultations in areas of finance, marketing, legal and human resources. Information about low-interest loans and additional small business programs will also be available.

For more information, call Tri-Met at 503-962-2150 or visit www.tri-met.org.

NW Natural Issues \$36 Credit

(AP)—NW Natural Gas has filed a request with the Oregon Public Utility Commission to give its customers a one-time credit on their June bills.

Residential customers could save up to \$36 next month, while commercial and industrial users could see hundreds of dollars in savings.

"Wholesale gas prices have continued their decline and we've been aggressive in finding gas supplies at the lowest costs," said Mark Dodson, NW Natural's president.

NW Natural set its rates based on the assumption that wholesale gas prices would be higher. When prices are lower than expected, NW Natural is bound by state rules to return the savings to its customers plus interest, spokesman Bob Valdez said.

Overall rates rose by 21 percent in 2000 and by nearly 19 percent in 2001.



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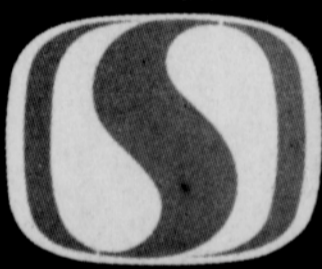
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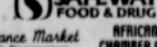
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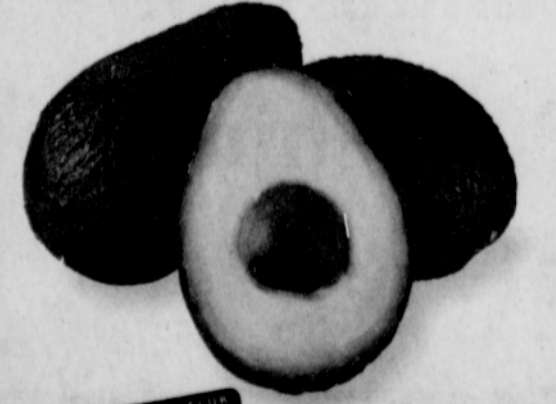
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