

Boyer Honored for Service to College

Robert Boyer, a longtime Portland resident and community activist, addresses the class of 2002 at Concordia University. Boyer received the northeast Portland college's Christi Crux award for significant contributions to the university from Dr. Charles Schlimpert (left), university president.

City Leads Nation in Sewer, Water Fees

(AP)—Sewer and water bills for residential customers in Portland are the second highest among nearly 50 big cities surveyed by an international consulting firm, exceeded only by Seattle.

Aging systems and rising building costs have driven most of the increase, city officials said. Portland is currently paying for a \$1 billion project to clean up sewage overflows into the Willamette River and Columbia Slough.

The city's sewer charges for a household using 7,500 gallons a month ranked as the highest of the 49 large cities that submitted data to Black and Veatch, an engineering, construction and consulting firm.

Portland's water rates ranked 15th highest out of the 49 cities surveyed.

Fire Pops Lid Off Storage Tank

(AP)—An explosion forced the lid off of a 100,000-gallon steel tank storing liquid asphalt early Friday in northwest Portland.

A fire broke out at 3 a.m. because of a miscommunication between employees at the Owens Corning plant, said Neil Heesacker, a Portland Fire Bureau spokesman. One employee thought the tank contained just 28,000 gallons when it actually held much less, Heesacker said.

When workers began heating the tank early Friday, too much vapor built up inside the tank and it exploded, Heesacker said.

No injuries were reported. The fire was contained within a few hours.

Plant officials estimated about \$150,000 in damage.

Well Runs Dry for AIDS Drugs

State freezes new enrollments as demand outstrips supply

(AP)—Public health officials have put a temporary freeze on new enrollments into Oregon's prescription drug assistance program for people with HIV and AIDS.

Dr. Mel Kohn, state epidemiologist, said the freeze is needed because higher drug prices and an 88 percent increase in applicants in the past two years have overwhelmed the program's \$3.8 million annual budget.

The number of enrollees rose from 558 in 1999 to 1,051 in 2001 because of the state's economic downturn.

"We deeply regret having to take this step," Kohn said. "We know this will have a serious impact on people who need this help."

The freeze could end by month's end, however. Kohn said that's when new policies, which could include lower benefits and stricter eligibility criteria, will likely be hammered out.

"We don't want to put someone on the program and then remove them until we clarify what we want to do for the rest of the year," Kohn said.

The state receives 20 to 25 new applications per month.

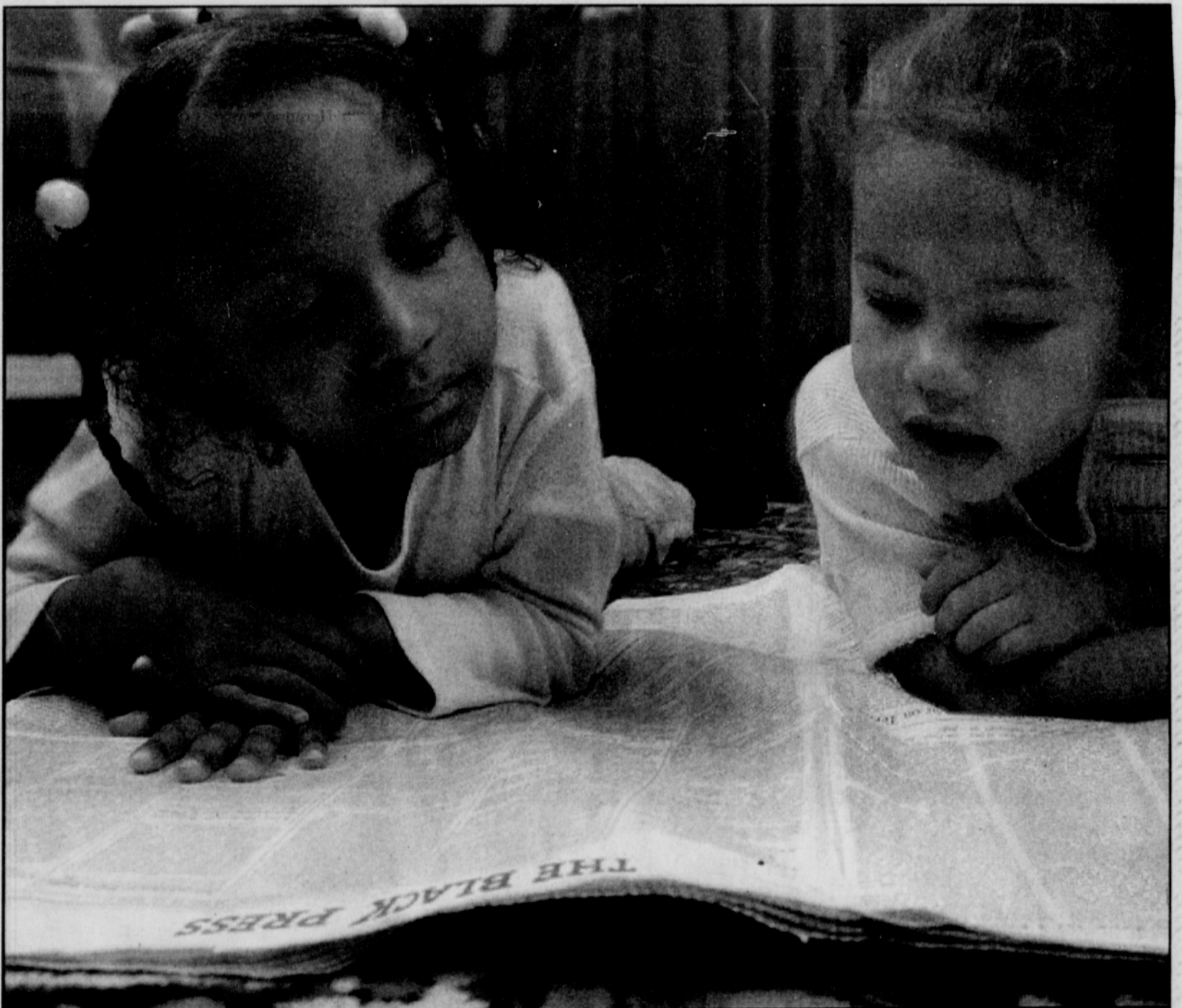
The prospective changes come as the number of HIV and AIDS cases in Oregon has been steady for the past four years. But those who have the virus or the disease are living longer because of new and expensive anti-viral medications.

Dr. Mark Loveless, medical director for the state's HIV programs, said the number of AIDS deaths hit 355 in 1994, then dropped off dramatically starting in 1996 because of new medications.

Only 47 Oregonians died from AIDS in 1999. Before the new medications, half of those with the AIDS virus progressed to the disease within nine years. Now it can take 18 to 20 years.

The state's prescription program served about 1,100 people, or about 21 percent of the 5,200 Oregonians infected with the virus.

More than 90 percent of the program's budget comes from federal sources.



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