

## Food Bank Calls For Volunteers

The Oregon Food Bank is asking for help in the fight against hunger.

At least 40 people are needed each week to sort and repackage donated food.

The agency serving the Portland metropolitan area from its headquarters in northeast Portland, is estimating that as many as 700,000 people will have eaten at least one meal from an emergency

food box in the last year.

The need is 16 to 18 percent higher than in previous years.

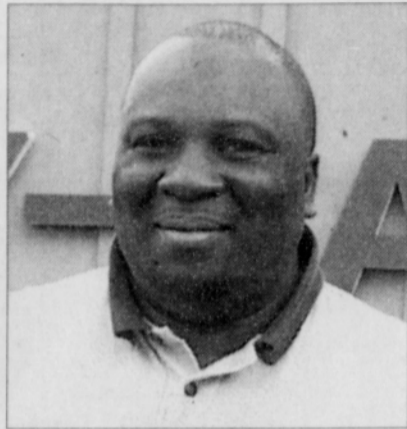
To meet the increase in both requests for donated food and donated food product, Oregon Food Bank needs more volunteers to help in projects that range from repackaging food to tending a new urban garden at the hunger relief agency's warehouse site.

"Having volunteers on a daily

basis enables us to efficiently get donated food out to agencies, and in turn, low income individuals. Volunteers who can commit to a weekly or monthly shift are the driving force behind this program," said OFB Volunteer Program Manager Ellen Curtis.

For information on how you can volunteer, call 503-282-0555, extension 300, or e-mail volunteer@oregonfoodbank.org.

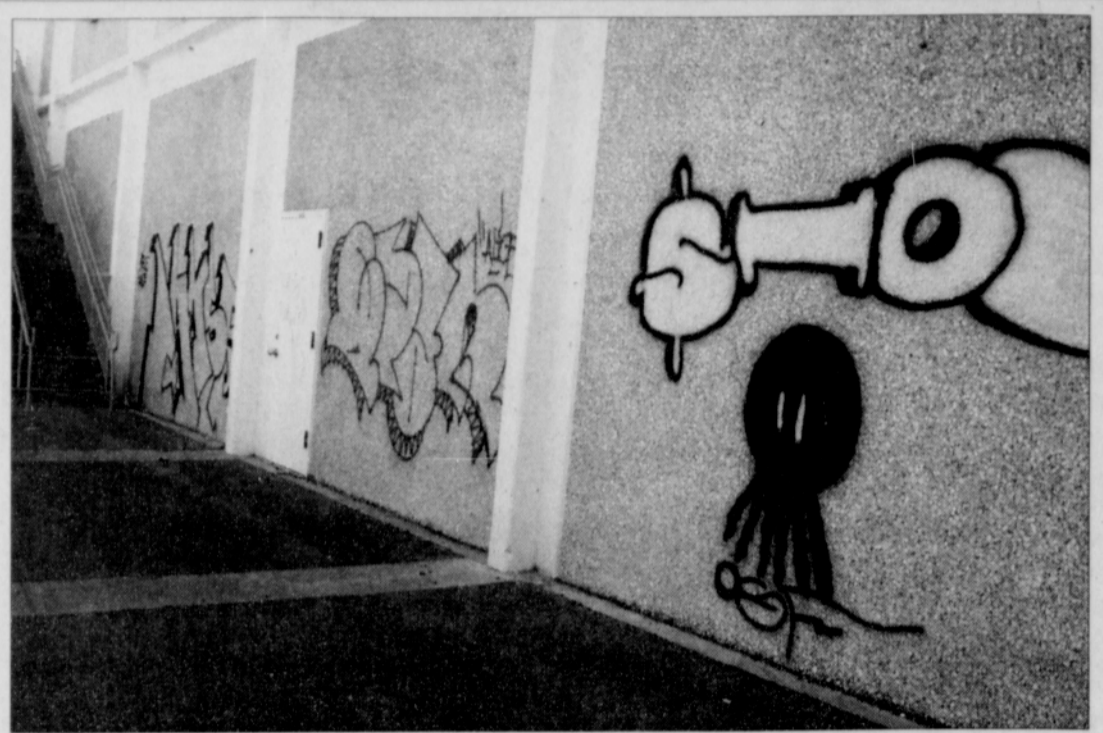
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## Vandals Hit Abandoned School

The Portland School District is receiving complaints about vandalism and graffiti at the abandoned Whitaker Middle School site. The northeast Portland school was closed more than a year ago because of mold and other maintenance issues. The district wants to tear it down and build a new middle school. In the meantime, Portland Police have proposed using the building to conduct drills on school terrorism. The school opened as John Adams High School in the fall of 1969.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

## Wyden Summit to Tackle Local Economy

With Oregon in the grips of recession and a jobless rate that's the highest in the country, the state needs a fresh approach to economic development, Sen. Ron Wyden says.

The Oregon Democrat plans to host a Dec. 9 conference at the Portland Convention Center with business leaders and elected officials from both parties to forge a coordinated strategy for economic development.

"I'm really excited about it, because this is the first time there's been a comprehensive effort by the public and private sector to essentially endow the people of the state with an eco-

nomie development plan," Wyden said.

The summit will "invest in the people of our state, committing them (to action) and then hold everybody accountable," Wyden said. Wyden proposed a kind of economic report card in which officials would be graded on whether they supported development initiatives and how hard they pushed them.

Wyden said the agenda would focus on four major areas: transportation, education, health care and energy.

When he talks to executives about expanding or locating a

business in the state, those are the major questions they ask, Wyden said.

"They say, 'Tell me about your transportation facilities. Am I going to be able to get my stuff in and out? Tell me if I am going to be able to get trained, educated workers,'" he said.

Business leaders also worry about health care and energy costs, Wyden said.

"Each one of those things goes right to the heart of whether somebody who's here is going to expand or somebody looking at us rather than Mississippi wants to come," Wyden said.

## New Food Service Rule Bans Latex

Allergic reactions associated with latex gloves have prompted a new state rule that bans their use among food service workers, according to public health officials at the Oregon Department of Human Services.

"This change will protect the health of Oregonians," says Mel Kohn, M.D., state epidemiologist in DHS. "Although the ban isn't effective until next March, we encourage restaurants to switch to safer gloves as soon as possible."

Natural rubber latex gloves

contain proteins that can cause allergies, according to Kohn. "Workers who are in repeated contact with the gloves are at increased risk of developing reactions that range from mild itching and rash to hives, difficulty in breathing and sometimes even death."

Kohn said that customers can be at risk of a reaction related to latex gloves, too. "People who are sensitive to latex rubber can have a reaction just by eating food that has been prepared by an employee wearing latex gloves,"

he said.

Between 8 percent to 17 percent of workers who are regularly exposed to powdered latex gloves are sensitive to latex and between 1 percent and 6 percent of the general population have latex allergy, according to Kohn.

The March 1, 2003 implementation date will give restaurant owners and supply companies time to switch to safer alternatives.

Vinyl and polyvinyl chloride gloves are considered low-cost solutions.

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