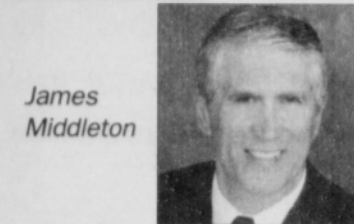


Search Narrows

continued ▲ from Front



Daniel LaVista



James Middleton

University of Iowa.

Former PCC President Jesus "Jess" Carreon left the college in July. The board hopes to have the district president position filled by late March, with a start date in July.

Portland Community serves 100,000 students and operates three comprehensive campuses, including the Cascade Campus in north Portland, along with five workforce training and education centers, a small business development center and education outlets in hundreds of community and business locations.

# Local Business Promotes Max Safety

A contract to address security and public safety issues on the new Interstate Max light rail line in north Portland has been extended for a local business.

CEC, Inc., 8245 N. Interstate, has been in charge of public safety and security during construction of the 5.8-mile line from the Rose Quarter to the Expo Center.

The company, owned by Charles Caisson, an African American, is now providing education services to address safety issues for kids in nearby schools and daycare centers.

Caisson is helping local kids learn the dangers surrounding the tracks. Because the trains are quick and quiet they can surprise someone not looking both ways when approaching the line.

Bill Bruce of Stacy and Witbeck, Inc., project manager for the Max construction, said Caisson's firm has done a great job of keeping security during the construction and addressing public safety issues.

TriMet recently hosted the first ride along the entire Interstate Max line. About 160 guests attended the "First Ride to Expo" event, including elected officials area business owners and area residents.

The running of test trains will continue on the line as Tri-Met prepares for a May 1 grand opening.



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER  
Darryl Peterson of CEC, Inc. (from left), Bill Bruce, Interstate Max project manager for Stacy and Witbeck General Engineering and Contractors, and Charles Caisson, owner of CEC, a north Portland inspection and safety business, pause during a recent celebration marking the Interstate Max's first ride to the Expo Center. The line opens to the public in May.

## Moonstar Beams with Energy

Since Moonstar opened its doors in December at 7410 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., patrons have been enjoying the elegant lounge and family restaurant rivaling any downtown bistro.

Moonstar is enticing the neighborhood to sample its all-American soul food and full bar at a grand opening party from 8 p.m. to close on Friday, March 5.

The night will feature free appetizers and specials, no cover charge, festive décor and live music with The Noah Peterson Soul "Tet and DJ Breeze.

Moonstar has a conference room for private parties and meetings and happy hour specials seven days a week from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. to close. Deejays spin jazz, blues and classic rhythm and blues five days a week, with live shows on Fridays.

Well-known northeast Portland entrepreneur Jack Chung is the owner of Moonstar and Yosief Embaye is the general manager. Chef Al Brinson cooks up a diverse and tantalizing menu, sure to please nibblers and diners alike.

For more information, call 503-285-1230.

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# A Man with Answers

continued ▲ from Front

ancing out population and achievement disparities at schools on Portland's east and west side.

"If you have (a surplus of) buildings on the eastside, and overcrowding on the westside, how do you attract west side students to eastside schools?" he asked.

Poe explained the district's need to feature special focus programs, including language immersion instruction and top rate teachers in eastside schools.

"Had we done that with Meek, we would still have that school for community kids," said Poe, referring to Meek Elementary School in northeast Portland, which closed last May because of budget cuts and low enrollment.

Poe and Derry Jackson, the other African American on the school board, were the only board members voting against closing Meek.

With four newly-elected school board members, Poe speculated that the elementary school would have remained open had the vote taken place today.

"I believe the new board would have considered a number of factors besides school size and are more in tune to (the impact of) the

*We have to inspire our youth, especially African Americans, to move toward financial independence so all communities can succeed economically.*

— Lorenzo Poe, Portland School Board co-chair and director of the Multnomah County Department of Schools and Community Partnerships.

closure of a school on one side of the river versus the other," he said.

Poe's day job also reflects his passion for education. He is the director of the county's Depart-

ment of Schools and Community Partnership.

"I've always been into youth development," said Poe. "How do you build the next generation?"

To address his question, Poe has founded several nonprofit organizations aimed at educating high-risk youth, including the

Youth Empowerment Coalition, which provides employment placement for under-achieving groups and the House of Umoja, a residential education facility for gang-involved youth.

"We have to inspire our youth, especially African Americans, to move toward financial independence so all communities can succeed economically," Poe said.

With so many common sense answers to problems afflicting Portland, Poe may extend his sphere of influence to city politics.

"I'm not running for mayor," he assures, "but if the city really says it needs minority representation, I would stand for it."

According to Poe, running for office today would be political "suicide."

"I'm not sure Portland wants African-American representation," he said, citing the few minorities holding public office or appointed to powerful commissions and committees in the city.

"I'm discouraged about the number of African Americans running for public office and I think the entire city should be outraged and asking the question, how much longer?"

Again, he offers a solution. Poe suggests creating leadership and development programs to train people of color to fill city leadership positions.

"I think we're one issue short of being a great city," said Poe. "Can we really live up to celebrating diversity and inclusivity at all levels?"

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