

# METRO

The Portland Observer



## Feliz Cinco de Mayo!

Weekend of fun with Latino flavor at Waterfront Park

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SECTION B

### Community Calendar

#### Healing Time

A Community Forum, A Time to Heal will address crime, community concerns and the conduct of the Portland Police Bureau with an open mic at 6 p.m. on May 14 at the King Neighborhood Facility, 4815 N.E. 7th Ave. For more information, call 503-284-0617.

#### Salvation for Kids

The Salvation Army's 10th anniversary luncheon is all about kids, from noon to 1 p.m. May 14 at the Lloyd Center Doubletree Hotel, 1000 N.E. Multnomah. For more information, call 503-963-1187.

#### Maya Angelou Visit

Maya Angelou joins the Unique Lives and Experiences lecture tour at 7:30 p.m. on May 19 at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. For tickets, visit [www.eventsunlimited.org](http://www.eventsunlimited.org).

#### OAME Luncheon

The Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs is holding its 16th annual Entrepreneurship Luncheon and Trade Show with keynote speaker Mayor Vera Katz from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, May 6 at the Oregon Convention Center. The trade show is free and the luncheon costs \$45.

#### Women Speak

Women have a voice at Women in NAACP, a new women's group, meeting from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. the first Saturday of each month at the American Red Cross Building, 3131 N. Vancouver Ave. For questions, call 503-249-6263.

#### Thanks, Mom

A Mother's Day brunch at the Oregon Zoo's Cascade Grill is from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. May 9. The buffet is \$15.95 for adults and \$7.95 for kids. For reservations, call 503-525-4299.

#### Old Home Workshop

A workshop called So, You Went Ahead and Bought an Old House? is from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, May 13 at Rejuvenation, upstairs at 1100 S.E. Grand Ave. Cost is \$17. To pre-register, call 503-231-7264.

#### Diabetes Walk

America's Walk for Diabetes is at 8 a.m. at the Rose Quarter Amphitheater in Portland and Esther Shore Park in Vancouver. Register online at [www.diabetes.org/walk](http://www.diabetes.org/walk) or call 888-DIABETES.

#### Fundraiser for PALS

The Police Activities League, which serves youth in Portland and Gresham, is sponsoring its 8th annual PAL Campaign for Cops Helping Kids dinner auction benefiting PAL at 5:30 p.m. May 8 at the Multnomah Athletic Club. For more information, call 503-823-0250.

#### Dinos on Trial

Dinosaurs are back in Portland with T. Rex on Trial, an exhibit at OMSI. Explore the evidence and decide for yourself if T. Rex was a predator or a scavenger. The hands-on exhibit runs through May 9.

#### Interest in Adoption?

A free information meeting for prospective adoptive parents held the third Wednesday of every month from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Belmont Public Library, 1038 S.E. 39th Ave. For more information, call 503-226-4870 or visit [www.openadopt.com](http://www.openadopt.com).

#### A Healing Song

Sankofa Health Institute offers a free diabetes support group from 6 to 7:30 p.m. every third Thursday at Alberta Simmons Plaza, 6707 N.E. MLK Blvd. For more information, call 503-285-2484.

## Housing Needs Filled with Density

### Infill apartments may be sign of the future

BY LEE PERLMAN  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

In some ways, the two-story block-like structure on a street of single-family homes on North Missouri Avenue, north of Killingsworth Street, is an anomaly. In others, it's the future.

The 10-plex at 5520 N. Missouri is one example of infill development, the introduction of higher density into communities of single unit frame houses, each on 5,000 square foot lots. The strategy is intended to provide more housing within the regional Urban Growth Boundary, where roads and other infrastructure already exist.

The trend started in 1980 when Portland rezoned many single family home neighborhoods to allow row houses, units sharing common walls and built at twice or more the density of the housing around it. Some fit well into the neighborhoods they were built in, but to the chagrin of neighbors, many had tall living quarters sitting on top of street-level garages.

One wrinkle in the infill saga has been the "skinny lot" development. Here, what seemed like a routine change in the zoning code in 1991, and a little-noted pattern in the way lots were legally platted in much of the city, allowed developers to build 15-foot-wide homes at double the zoned density in many areas.

After much controversy, there was consensus by city officials on two points: Infill development of some sort, in some areas, was worthwhile; and there is a need for better design for the new houses to make them fit in better with local communities.

To this end commissioner Randy Leonard, the strongest proponent of "skinny houses," initiated the Infill Design Project. At a series of open houses, residents were shown apartment, row house and duplex designs and asked to select which one they liked best. Project manager Bill Cunningham emphasized that the project is dealing with the design of such developments, not where, whether or how densely they should be allowed.

The North Missouri development was approved with no public review, builder PTR Homes having asked for no adjustments to the zoning code. The site is zoned CS, which allows housing by right but is intended primarily for commercial development.

PTR's Tom Spitanagel feels that with the "tremendous expansion" of Portland Community College's Sylvania Campus, modest apartments here is the highest and best use.

"We're really excited about providing



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Kurt Haapala, a north Portland resident and chair of the Humboldt Neighborhood Association, doesn't care much for the development of a 10-unit apartment complex on a standard size lot north of Killingsworth Avenue on Missouri Street. Haapala says the housing looks atrocious and won't appeal to people looking for permanent housing. The owner of the property hopes to cash in on demand for student housing near the PCC Cascade campus and transit rides who don't own cars.

housing for students," he said.

The units, ranging from 450 to 600 square feet, should be complete by July, he says, at which time PTR will either sell the complex or

rent it themselves. He estimated rents at \$475 to \$550.

The project is consistent with a trend in

ing spaces, and this project contains none.

"We agree with the city that being so close to light rail, many of the people who

rent here won't have cars," Spitanagel says. The site is just five blocks from the North Killingsworth light-rail station on Interstate Avenue.

The builder says the commercial zone would have allowed the company to build 15 units on the single residential size lot, but "We didn't want to overwhelm the neighborhood." However, he adds, "I'm not a believer that higher density is a bad thing."

He concedes that there has been badly designed infill development, but he argues that some of it has been caused by city regulations. In the case of the Missouri project, for instance, a rule that all the units face the street prevented the company from providing as much open space as they would have wished.

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*"We want housing people would want to live in permanently. The only reason anyone would rent this is because they were forced to because they couldn't find anything else."*

— Humboldt Neighborhood Chair Kurt Haapala on a new infill-housing project that adds a 10-unit apartment to a standard size residential lot

## Public Works Effort Has Ripple Effect On Neighborhood

### Rebuilding team adopts northeast Portland home

Pacific Power energized a northeast Portland neighborhood by painting, hammering and helping to rebuild a home with great repair needs.

Armed with paint brushes and power tools about 50 employee volunteers converged on a 1916 home on Northeast 65th Avenue recently to make repairs and tidy the inside and out for its elderly, disabled homeowner.

"Many might wonder why we'd choose to expend a lot of energy into fixing up a stranger's house when we could be working on our own homes," said Nancy Towne-Smith, a business analyst in Pacific Power's Corporate Business Services department who has helped coordinate the Pacific Power team for the past three years and is on the board of Rebuilding Together.

"We're able-bodied, hard-working people who believe in giving back to our community," Towne-Smith said. "Our efforts have a ripple effect on the whole neighborhood, and it's worth it to see the good that one day of hard work can bring to one home, one person, one area of the city."



PHOTO COURTESY OF ACKROYD PHOTOGRAPHY

Pacific Power employees Jamie Sims and Judy Ridenour volunteer to install a new fence for a northeast Portland resident.

Rebuilding Together provides needed home repair and rehab services for low income, elderly and disabled homeowners and their families in local communities. The scope of the work includes carpentry, electrical, plumbing, roofing, prep and painting, drywall, debris removal, yard maintenance and much more.

Rebuilding Together solicits homeowner referrals from area churches, neighborhood associations, concerned neighbors, community development corporations and state and local service agencies.

Last year, the Portland chapter rehabilitated 58 homes and six non-profit facilities through the combined efforts of 1,400 plus skilled and unskilled volunteers. An estimated \$950,000 worth of value was put back into the Portland community. Materials and supplies required are either donated to or purchased by Rebuilding Together and repairs are completed by volunteers at no charge to the homeowner.

"In addition to improving the community where we live and work, another benefit is the sense of accomplishment and teamwork among the employee volunteers," said Towne-Smith. "This activity helps disprove the myth that Pacific Power is just a big corporation by getting our employees out in the community to interact with our customers in a very positive and meaningful way."