Axe Falls on Gregory Heights, Rose City Park, Kellogg Schools

Humboldt closure delayed

Two northeast Portland schools Ave. and one southeast Portland school penses in the wake of falling tax support and declining enrollment.

The axe fell on Gregory Heights Middle School, 7334 N.E. Siskiyou St.; Kellogg Middle School, 3330

The board plans to meet again were approved for closure Mon- on Thursday to decide the fate of day night by a Portland School Hollyrood, Rieke and Portsmouth Board looking for ways to cut ex- schools and an unnamed school in the Sellwood neighborhood.

Monday's decision came before a packed audience of parents, community members and school officials. Many spoke out against clos-S.E. 69th Ave.; and Rose City Park ing schools in areas that were eco-Elementary School, 2334 N.E. 57th nomically depressed or had large

The school district also plans to transition 12 schools to a kindergarten through 8th Grade formats, eliminating many middle schools.

Last week, a recommendation to close Humboldt Elementary in north Portland for the upcoming school year was given more time, following intense opposition.

Humboldt parents and supporters have said the school has drawn relatively high achievement from the lowest-income children in the district and argued that low-income children do better in smaller schools. They also noted the difficulty of folding the elementary into Ockley Green Middle School, located across Interstate 5.

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Ex-School Janitors May Get Millions

Court upholds lawsuit victory

October 2005 ruling, stating that the district violated state labor laws when it fired the workers in 2002.

More than 300 custodians who were replaced by contract employees remain protected by last year's 4-3 court decision. Contracting out the custodians saved the district \$10.8 million over two years, according to a 2004 audit. The decision, however, was devastating to representing the custodians. the hundreds of workers not able to find other jobs.

Portland Public School's attempt - calculated by the custodian's to get cheaper labor four years ago wages of about \$16 million in the backfired in their faces again last last year of their contract, includweek, when the Oregon Supreme ing benefits and retirement costs, Court refused to reconsider an adding up to \$64 million in back pay over the past four years. But that sum could be reduced by wages custodians earned in other

Complicated negotiations between both parties will likely start when the district's contract with private contractor Portland Habilitation Center expires June 30, according to Jim Coon, an attorney

"There are more than 300 individual stories," he said. "We're Now the ex-employees may be hoping the district and we can work awarded \$64 million in back wages that out as an amicable thing."

Deadline Nears for Medicare Part D

Seniors who don't sign up face penalty

African American leaders are urging seniors to sign up for the new Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage. If they do penalty.

many seniors are not taking advantage of this important health limited incomes who may qualify for extra help paying for their Church, 4222 N.E. 12th Ave.

prescription drug plans.

If a person who qualifies for Medicare Part D does not enroll by the May 15 deadline, they will be penalized one percent for each month they are not enrolled (for the rest of their life). That's one percent per month more for the cost of their monthly premiums.

not sign up for a prescription ers and others are urging family drug plan by May 15, they will members to help their loved ones face a possible lifetime premium enrolled in Medicare to sign up While enrollment is voluntary, gap in prescription drugs cover-

There will be an opportunity to benefit, particularly those with enroll Thursday, May 4, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Maranatha

African American church lead-

now, so they do not experience a age or have to pay a penalty.

Light Shines on Darfur Genocide

ing Democrat Congressman Earl Blumenauer gathered at Pioneer ministration to take action. Square in downtown Portland Sunday, calling for an end to the conflict in Darfur.

Similar protests occurred nation- killed. wide, including one on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. There, actors, politicians and religious leaders joined thousands of dem- the 21st century

Hundreds of protesters, includ- onstrators to bring attention to mass casualties and ask the Bush Ad-

> The Darfur region in western Sudan has been a place where more than 200,000 people have been

More than two million have been driven from their homes in what's being called the first genocide of



Meet with the Mayor & Commissioners: Community Budget Hearing

Join us to share your priorities!

Thursday May 11, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM -Focus: Public Testimony-

Regarding Mayor's Proposed Budget

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www.portlandonline.com/communitybudget

ADA accessible Special needs: 823-4519 in advance More info & childcare/interpretation inquiries: 823-5288 TDD: 823-6868

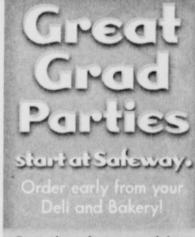
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