

METRO

The Portland Observer



Spellbinding Dance

A celebration of women choreographers
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Life and Art Intertwine
Milagro Theatre presents 'Frida'

SECTION B

Students Named to National Academic Team



Give credit to PCC Cascade instructors

Once in awhile, when you've gone the extra mile for your school and neighborhood, good things come back to you.

That's the case for two Portland Community College Cascade Campus students who were recently honored for their achievements in the classroom and their leadership on campus and in the community.

Lisa Hummel of southeast Portland and Debra Lynn Porta of north Portland, both second-year students, were named to the All-USA Academic Team by Phi Theta Kappa, a nationwide community college honor society. Both women will receive a \$1,000 scholarship and travel to Nashville, Tenn. in April for Phi Theta Kappa's national conference.

Both women said their experience at PCC's north Portland campus has made

Portland Community College students Lisa Hummel and Debra Lynn Porta are recognized for their volunteer work and activism at north Portland's Cascade Campus.

them aware of an inner potential for achievement that they didn't know existed before they began their studies.

"Being in student leadership has made all the difference," said Hummel. "I never thought of myself as a leader; I was always more of a follower. The opportunities I've found here have given me the courage to strike out on my own."

Porta described a similar sense of self-discovery when she recalled her activities at Cascade. She has been active in student government, helping to organize a voter registration drive and a voter education program. Her efforts led to her being named director of legislative affairs for the college's student body association.

Before she graduates next spring she plans to organize a series of student forums aimed at raising awareness of current events and developing a support structure for veterans returning from the war in Iraq.

"I'm looking forward to seeing these programs come to fruition, especially helping the returning soldiers," said Porta, who plans to transfer to Portland State University to pursue a degree in sociology.

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Diverse Company Builds on Success

State bridge program brings opportunity

Good fences may make good neighbors. For Big J Construction, good fences also provide good business opportunities.

The Medford, Ore. company is one of only a handful of African-American owned heavy construction companies in the state and highlights the need for workforce development within the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Big J Construction has installed thousands of feet of fencing along Interstate 5 under a contract that aims to repair or replace hundreds of aging bridges across the state while stimulating the state's economy.

As part of that effort, Oregon Bridge Delivery Partners, ODOT's program management firm for the bridge program, prequalified approximately 120 specialty contractors for work on the program. About half of those firms are owned by minorities or women.

For Big J, the bridge program work was a springboard of opportunity. As a subcontractor to CH2M HILL, in 2005 Big J secured a \$142,000 contract to install fencing along sections of I-5 from Roseburg to Sutherlin, and in 2006 the firm received a \$97,000 contract to install additional fencing in the same area.

As a result of its involvement with



Jesse Williams III (second from right) leads one of only a handful of African-American owned heavy construction companies in the state. He is joined by his Big J Construction crew (pictured, from left) Joe Christensen, Mark Lecher, David Smith and Jim Wamboldt.

the bridge program, Big J more than doubled its number of employees and significantly expanded its capacity to handle increasingly complex engineering and construction jobs.

"We added an engineer, a field supervisor, an operator and laborer—expanding our team from three to seven people," said owner Jesse Williams III, who established his firm in 1997. "Being part of the bridge program has increased our exposure to some of the larger contractors. We are hoping this will open the door to more subcontracting opportunities."

With the increased capacity and larger workforce, Williams elaborated on what this means for Big J.

"As our focus has changed this year to a wider variety of heavy civil engineering projects, we are looking forward to meeting the challenges of increasing the complexity of our project scope," he said.

Projects the company has recently taken on include designing and building a timber observation structure for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, resurfacing the Rogue River Bridge for the USDA Forest Service, installing new doors and windows for an Air National Guard hangar, and securing a significant contract with the Bureau of Land Management to fabricate and install a floating boat dock system.

"We want to be known as go-to experts who perform quality work within the timeframe of the job," said Jim Wamboldt, Big J manager.

Community Calendar

Nutritional Cooking

On Tuesday, Jan. 9, from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., the National College of Natural Medicine will host a free nutrition class and cooking demonstration by the Nike chef at 221 N.E. Freemont St. Call 503-413-1850 for reservations, seating is limited.

Martin Luther King Mass

A Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. memorial mass will be celebrated Saturday, Jan. 13, at St. Mary's Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, located at Northwest 18th Avenue and Couch Street. All are invited to attend.

Financial Aid Seminar

Assistance and expert advice to assist in gaining financial aid will be available on Saturday, Jan. 20, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Mount Hood Community College, in the college library on the second floor in Room 3333. Call 503-491-7262 for information.

Weight Loss Series

New Seasons Market at Northeast 33rd and Killingsworth Street will host free weight loss classes on Jan. 31, Feb. 28, March 28,

and April 25 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Season for Giving

The African American Health Coalition, a non-profit that touches the lives of millions of African Americans each year, reminds you to support your community organization. All donations, grants, and gifts are tax deductible. For more information, visit aahc-portland.org.

Diabetes Support Group

Legacy Emanuel Hospital hosts a diabetes support group the first and third Thursdays of every month, from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m., in Room 1027.

Hospice Volunteers Needed

Legacy Hospice Services is looking for volunteers for the Scappoose/St. Helens, Beaverton and Oregon City/Gladstone areas. Winter training classes start Jan. 18. Contact 503-225-6157 or email atcox@lhs.org.

Bradley-Angle House

The Bradley-Angle House needs volunteers to help its outreach against domestic violence. Women of color and bilingual women are encouraged to call. For more information, call 503-282-9940.

Girl Scouts Screen Video

Friday, Feb. 2, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., at the Kennedy School theater, the Girl Scouts will raise funds for its Family Giving Program with the screening of the locally produced video "A Circle is Round". Call 503-287-5140 or 503-977-6805 for more information.

Parenting Classes

Newborns don't come with instruction manuals but parents and parents-to-be can attend classes through Providence Health Systems to learn about a variety of topics from pain and childbirth to breastfeeding to infant CPR and much more. For a schedule of events, call 503-574-6595 or visit: providence.org/classes.

Hatha Yoga Class

In Other Words Books and Resources hosts Hatha Yoga classes for beginners and all levels, every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. at In Other Words, 8 N.E. Killingsworth. All genders and ages and donations welcome.

Work Against Abuse

Community Advocates invites those interested in protecting children from abuse to become an event volunteer, event outreach, technology expert, graphic artists

or office support team member. For information, call 503-280-1388.

Women in Community Service

Volunteer female mentors are being sought by Women in Community Service to work with incarcerated women at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. The women provide support and encouragement for inmates transitioning from prison back into the community. For information, call 503-570-6614.

Black History Museum

The Black History Museum of Oregon is seeking brilliant minds of concerned individuals to help in restructuring the museum foundation's committee. For information, call 503-284-0617.

Oregon Food Bank

The Oregon Food Bank seeks volunteers on Mondays from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to noon, to sort and repack perishable foods. Call 503-282-0555, ext. 272 or visit Oregonfoodbank.org.

Volunteer for Crisis Line

Want to make a difference in your community? Volunteers and advocates are needed for the Portland Women's Crisis Line. The needs include on-call advocates to re-

spond in person or over the phone, outreach and educational efforts, and fundraising and administrative duties. Call 503-232-4176 for more information.

Home buying Classes

Portland Community Land Trust helps first time and low-income homebuyers purchase homes at below market price. Attend a free, one-hour class to learn more about the program. Contact Kelly@pclt.org or call 503-493-0293.

Stroller Class for Moms

Are you a new mom or have a toddler? Get some exercise and meet other moms at the free Stroller Strides class, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursday at Peninsula Park. All you need is a stroller, water, a mat or towel and comfortable shoes. Call Helen at 503-260-5018 for more information.

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years of
community service