

Portland Police Chief: 'We can do better'

Sizer reflects one year in

BY SARAH BLOUNT
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Almost a year into her tenure as head of the Portland Police Bureau, Chief Rosie Sizer's most common reply to a host of police issues and community complaints is "We can do better."

Following a swift and unexpected appointment to the top job last April,

Sizer inherited problems like racial profiling and a spike in gang violence. She has juggled these problems with new ones cropping up, namely the recent and questionable use of police force.

Sizer discussed these topics with the Portland Observer in an exclusive interview last week. She also reflected on the same issues during



Police Chief Rosie Sizer

a speech Friday at the City Club of Portland.

One of the first topics was the new curfew program launched during spring break as a pilot in north and northeast and downtown Portland. She defended the bureau's decision to target downtown and minority areas, saying that is where most violent juvenile problems occurred last year.

"There was criticism last year about not dealing with juvenile

problems," Sizer said. "Our intent is to get ahead of the curve."

Many residents of north and northeast Portland voiced their frustrations about large groups of young people gathered among residential streets last summer, flouting parental and police authority and sometimes getting violent. When the community recognized the problem of "flash mobs," they exposed a greater need for youth advocates because even a few po-

lice officers admitted there was a lack of control, including Northeast Precinct Lt. Steve Smith, who said that to "observe, disperse, shut down and escort out" youth from gathering spots was a "band-aid approach."

Sizer said she has talked with other chiefs across the country and they report young individuals are fueling a rise in crime within their cities.

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Week in The Review



Free Computers

Becoming a geek can get you a free computer. The non-profit organization Free Geek has been helping the community learn about computers but also giving families access to technology for free. See story, Metro section.

Secret War with Iran

A Pakistani tribal militant group responsible for a series of deadly guerrilla raids inside Iran has been secretly encouraged and advised by American officials since 2005, U.S. and Pakistani intelligence sources tell ABC News.

Florida Repeat

The University of Florida wins a back-to-back NCAA Division I basketball championship and becomes the first ever team to win the trophy with the same starting five. See Sports, page B6.

Church Vandalized

Anex-gang outreach worker and his associates were arrested Tuesday after foul language, gang signs and the police code for murder was spray painted on Victory Outreach Church on Northeast Alberta Street. See story, page A2.

Mundy in New Orleans

Urban League of Portland President and chief executive officer Marcus Mundy is among a large group of Oregonians in New Orleans this week to offer aid and support to residents of the city still recovering from the devastation left by Hurricane Katrina. See story, Metro section.

Majority Flips on MLK Corridor

Blacks no longer largest population

RAYMOND RENDLEMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland experienced much this decade: war protests, recession, police brutality and a rash of high-profile corruption cases. Gentrification may not seem great in comparison, but nobody celebrates the economically forced dispersal of north and northeast Portland's black community.

In 2000, Portland had an area stretching for several miles along Northeast Martin Luther King Boulevard with more black residents than any other ethnicity. The estimated population of 14,189 residents broke down as 6,760 black and 4,782 white residents. By 2005, according to the latest Census Bureau estimates, the same area had 5,874 blacks and 5,906 whites living among 13,421 residents.

Five contiguous census tracts south of Columbia Boulevard have several thousand residents, with only one small tract that can claim to be majority African American. That Census tract is bordered by North Russell and Fremont Streets in the Emanuel Hospital area where just 330 residents live, 172 of them black.

Abrianna Williams has lived in one of the area's few houses for nine years.

"It's kind of shocking, but it was inevitable," she says. "I don't feel isolated; it's just different, not better or something to be feared."



PHOTO BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Abrianna Williams hangs out with a friend on the porch of her house in the last majority-black census tract left in Multnomah County, a small tract bordered by North Russell and Fremont Streets with an estimated 330 residents, 172 of them black.

During the 1920s and '30s, Williams' census tract formed the northern part of a large, densely populated black community east of the

Broadway Bridge. But after World War II, the community was forced north by gentrification and urban-renewal projects that included the

construction of Interstates 5 and 405, Memorial Coliseum and Legacy Emanuel Hospital.

Now the core black community

lives in small pockets of the city like the one around Williams' house. The only other largely black area lies near Killingsworth Street on the other end of Northeast MLK Blvd.

Some see the developments as a type of conspiracy to drive the prices to levels that most African Americans cannot afford. "In the next seven years it will be worse," said Orlando Woolridge on the corner of Killingsworth and MLK Blvd. "All these vacancies up and down MLK Blvd. will be filled up with non-minority businesses, and that's sad."

But many that serve the black community haven't noticed any significant changes. "The Census Bureau may say one thing," says Blazers' Boys and Girls Club manager Jackie Dunbar, "but the reality of what we deal with every day is still majority-black."

At Jefferson High School, a two-thirds-black student population remains while a greater proportion of white families support other neighborhoods and programs.

"Black students are also moving out to districts where they weren't previously there, but the services aren't necessarily there for them," Urban League education director Howard Moriah says. "Mostly what we have in terms of what's left of the black community is a virtual community."

The lack of services for black students outside of north and northeast Portland has caused many community-program administrators to stalwartly serve the remaining core as well as black fami-

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With War Abroad, Are We Prepared at Home?

Deployments deplete resources

BY SARAH BLOUNT
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

As America wages war in Iraq and Afghanistan, residents here at home are left in a vulnerable position because of depleted resources belonging to the Oregon National

Guard.

Much of the equipment stored in armories across the state is currently overseas — equipment that must eventually be replaced.

That means if a natural disaster happened soon, the guard would

be first responders but emergency equipment may be in more remote areas of Oregon.

"We have about 40 percent of equipment that we normally would have in the state," said Oregon National Guard spokesperson Cap-

tain Mike Braibish. That includes radios, night vision goggles and weapons.

Braibish said the equipment has been required for the ongoing fight in the War on Terror.

"We make every effort to bring equipment home," he added, "but military necessity can override that."

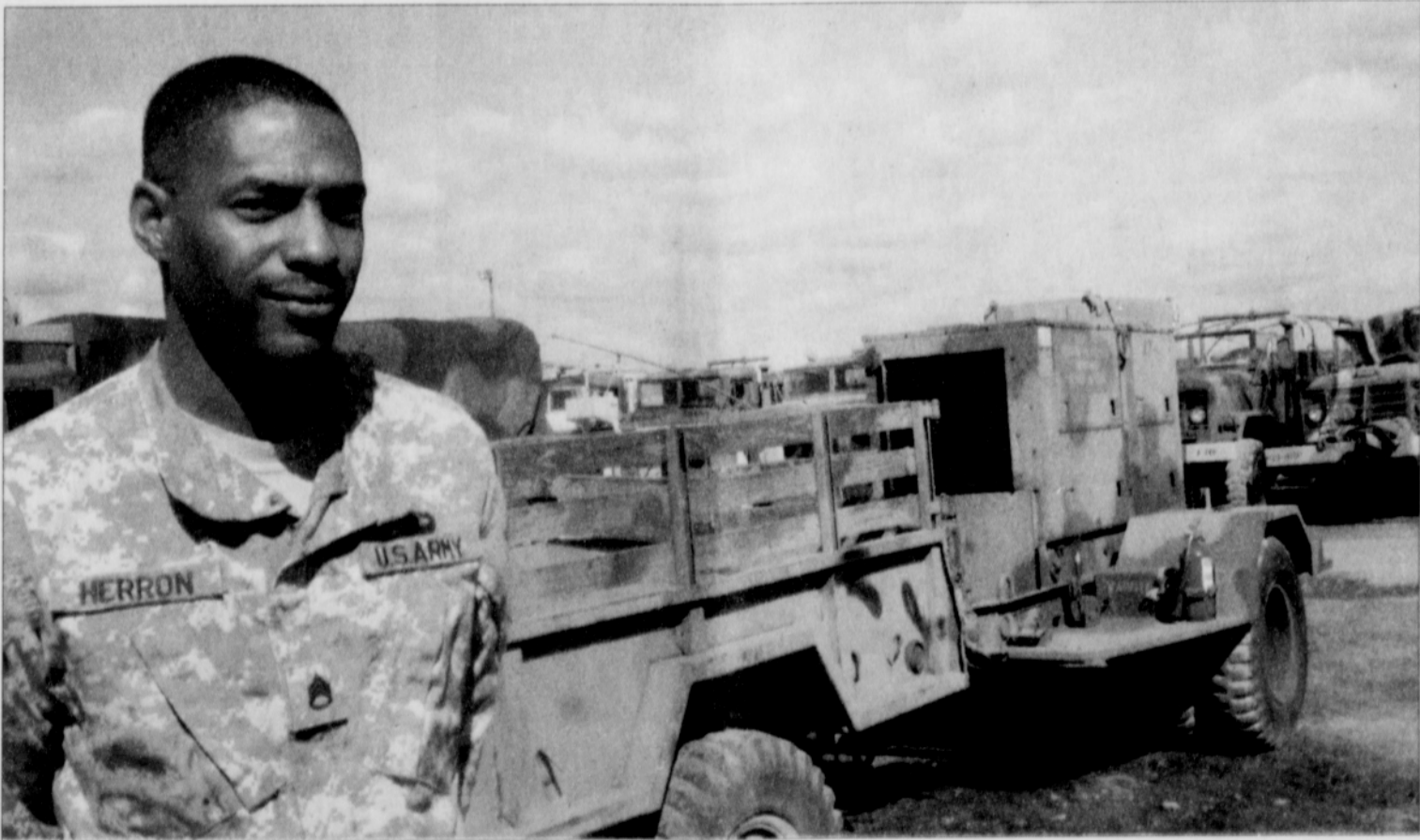
Currently just 830 soldiers out of a statewide total of 6,400 are fighting overseas, in Afghanistan, but the war has nonetheless impacted training for possible missions at home. Braibish said guard members normally train with M4 service rifles, better suited for urban environments, but are currently training with what's available in Oregon — in this case M16 rifles.

A shortage of trucks is not as dire as other equipment, Braibish said. Oregon is about 300 trucks short of an adequate supply, partly because many of the vehicles can't be used in Iraq or Afghanistan.

He said eventually the Oregon National Guard will receive funding allocations to replace lost equipment, but "we have to fight for the funding and make sure our voices are heard."

According to the National Guard Bureau in Arlington, Va., the guard will receive \$21 billion to replace equipment over the next five years,

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BY SARAH BLOUNT/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Staff Sgt. Bernard Herron is stationed at the Oregon National Guard Kliever Armory on Northeast 33rd Drive. The Armory is not short on trucks since many of the vehicles can't be used in Iraq or Afghanistan, but is short on troops because they are fighting overseas.

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