



Gov. Ted Kulongoski welcomes a delegation led by Oregon business entrepreneur Roy Jay for a bill signing ceremony for Project Clean Slate. The program gives people a second chance to clear up criminal and civil court judgments.

Activist Makes Legislative Run

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of getting sponsors by making sure that her campaign would have the approval of many Portland leaders, including the incumbent State Rep. Jackie Dingfelder and African-American Sen. Avel Gordly, the legislators who opened the seat. Dingfelder has announced plans to run for Gordly's senate seat. Gordly, along-time Democrat who changed to Independent a year ago, is giving up politics to teach at Portland State University.

Like Gordly, Boston may not be one to simply tow the party line in garnering support, as she has shown in serving her Catholic Church council.

"Faith has been essential in developing my compassion," she says, "but my faith has evolved to a point that I don't fit in with everything the church stands for: primarily I'm very pro-choice."

Boston considers access to all kinds of health services and community policing top priorities for a district that is currently having some of the most blatant problems with prostitution in the city.

"The first step is to be very honest (about prostitution)," she says. "The next step is looking at

the sources, because a lot of these people haven't had treatment for addictions."

She sees many more under-addressed problems stemming from demographic changes in the surrounding neighborhoods.

"We're dealing with persons who can't afford to live in north-

east Portland that are being moved out to central northeast where they had never really lived before," she says. "Our schools were having a difficult time and now are much more challenged dealing with racial and class issues because they have to deal with the dispersement of persons due to gentrification."

Traffic issues are also a high priority for her as she considers how this district is bisected by Sandy Boulevard, 82nd Avenue and Interstate 205.

"I think the special thing about this district is that it is central, so all the issues that really resonate with what persons might call proper northeast Portland, all the issues that are really prevalent in that community, but then again also the issues that are prevalent in mid-county and East County such as Parkrose, also resonate right in the middle of this district."



Cyreena Boston

Clean Slate Bill Enacted

A state that has been known for environmental issues, the bottle bill, medical research and high technology projects has stepped forward, led by Gov. Ted Kulongoski, with support from nearly the entire 2007 Oregon legislature to sign into law House Bill 3054 which provides the first funding steps for Project Clean Slate.

The program is the brainchild of Oregon business entrepreneur, Roy Jay and the African American Chamber of Commerce, which has assisted literally thousands of indi-

viduals regain drivers-license privileges, expunge minor criminal convictions and get back on track to gain or upgrade employment, housing and other opportunities.

"Oregon is the first state to ever have or fund a program such as this," says Jay. "We applaud our Multnomah County District Attorney, Circuit Court Judges, Public Defenders, Private Attorneys, Law Enforcement Officials, DMV, Child Support and city officials showing that our citizens can all be on the same page for worthwhile projects

like this."

The funding will help with basic financial stability for the program which was being handled primarily by volunteers, African-American Chamber and Jay's personal contributions over the past two years.

Bruce Melvin, a recipient of the Project Clean Slate program said in an ABC Television interview "it was like a blessing from God that Project Clean Slate was there for me." Melvin was able to pay off over \$3,000 in delinquent traffic fines through community service and

attending personal and community responsibility workshops.

Project Clean Slate has caught the attention of many, garnering awards as well as national recognition. At least two organizations are considering Portland, Oregon as a site for their future convention simply because of the leadership demonstrated to assist local citizens. Jay says that his staff is planning to develop a template which can be utilized in other qualifying cities.

For more information, visit projectcleanslate.com.

Evacuees Still Hurting

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sistance to the Black Citizen's Coalition in northeast Portland.

"We're trying to pick up where Catholic Charities left off," says Shelly Curry, office manager for the coalition.

Catholic Charities estimates that it has helped 3,100 people relocate in Oregon. Its website calls the influx "a microcosm of New Orleans: homeowners and welfare recipients, scientists and salesmen, some Latino and white; most are African-American."

Staff members at Catholic Charities have found housing and employment for many of these evacuees, the latter by working with Portland Community College and its continuing education program. They have also helped evacuees navigate Federal Emergency Management Administration rules to receive assistance in as timely a manner as possible.

But their \$350,000 fund to provide these services ran dry as the disaster became a more distant memory, according to Dennis Keenan, Catholic Charities' executive director.

Evacuees were able to survive



BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Joe Scott and Sheila Sherman still do not have their pre-Katrina quality of life. They have been struggling to meet basic needs ever since they left the shelter in San Antonio where they met.

with this help, but many find it impossible to buy another house or even establish a wardrobe for work without a financial jumpstart.

The Black Citizen's Coalition plans to keep soliciting grants for

Katrina victims, who have continued to face higher unemployment and eviction rates than the general population.

"The biggest roadblock is that after two years people think that

the evacuees should be on their feet by now, and everything should be rosy," says Willie Brown, executive director of the coalition. "But does anyone build an entire life in two years?"

Popular Dolls Get Multicultural Makeover

(AP) -- Toy store aisles are getting a multicultural makeover.

Bolstered by the success of Nickelodeon's popular bilingual children's character, Dora the Explorer, and the spending power of the nation's growing minority population, toy retailers across the country are filling their shelves with dolls whose skin colors and facial features reflect the girls and boys who play with them.

Although black and Hispanic dolls have been around for decades, the newer incarnations try harder at authenticity, rather than simply tinting the hair and skin from "white" doll molds.

Now, discount retailer Kmart hopes to cash in on a growing appetite for ethnic toys among minority consumers, and their rising spending power. It's launching its own initiative this month, putting dozens of multicultural dolls on shelves in each of its 1,400 stores.

When the rollout is completed this week, Kmart stores will sell nearly four dozen types of ethnic dolls—a nearly fourfold increase from what's currently available. The dolls are flanked by an advertising campaign in the store's

circulars and designed to appeal to black, Hispanic and Asian parents.

"We needed to be relevant to them," said Philipp Elliott, a toy merchandise manager at Kmart, a subsidiary of Hoffman Estates-based Sears Holdings Corp.

Becoming relevant to minority shoppers can reap big benefits. About one in three Americans is a minority, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Between 2006 and 2011, the spending power of the country's blacks, Asians, Native Americans and multiracial shoppers is expected to grow 38 percent, to \$1.9 trillion.

"People want a doll and a story that reflects who they are," said Julie Parks, a spokeswoman for Mattel's American Girl, which includes Native American, Hispanic and black historical dolls, as well as dolls with myriad skin, eye and hair color combinations. "There is something about seeing a reflection of themselves in that character and in that doll that they can relate to."

The next generation of dolls have diverse eyes, noses and mouths—instead of the traditional "white" dolls whose skin was dyed and whose hair was tinted in a darker shade.

Second Bird with West Nile Found

Signaling the establishment of West Nile virus in the county, a dead robin found last week in the Kenton neighborhood of north Portland is the second bird to test positive for the potentially deadly disease.

"This confirms that West Nile virus is established in Multnomah County this year," says Chris Wirth, Manager of Multnomah County's Vector and Nuisance Control. "We have not seen any human cases originating in Multnomah County, but it does mean that people need to take precautions against mosquitoes."

West Nile Virus is primarily an infection of birds. It is spread when a mosquito feeds on an infected bird and then bites a hu-

man. Birds cannot transmit the disease to humans, nor can it be transmitted through person-to-person contact, according to Wirth.

"Most people infected with West Nile virus will have no symptoms or a mild, flu-like illness," states Gary Oxman, Multnomah County Public Health Officer. "The infection is more serious for people over the age of 50, and also in people with suppressed immune systems."

The best defense against West Nile virus is for individuals to protect themselves from mosquito bites by eliminating all sources of standing water, by avoiding the outside at dawn and dusk, and by wearing long pants and DEET insect repellent.

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