



Last Weekend for Voter Sign-Ups
Groups canvass to build political power before Tuesday's registration deadline



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Week in The Review

Clinton, Obama Battle

Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama collided Tuesday in the Pennsylvania primary, the last of the big-state contests in a Democratic presidential campaign growing more negative the longer it goes. A defeat for Clinton could spell the end of her candidacy. But a sizable win would strengthen her claim to being the stronger general election opponent.

Free after 26 Years

A Portland man's brother who was locked away 26 years for murder was granted a new trial and freed on bond Friday with the help of two attorneys who came forward with a client's confession after he died in prison. See story, page A3.

Record Gas Prices

The average cost for a gallon of unleaded regular hit a record high in Oregon Tuesday, reaching \$3.58 a gallon as the national average eclipsed \$3.51 a gallon. Analysts say the price jump is tied to crude oil inching toward the \$120 a barrel as investors seek a high return.

Hunger Crisis Looms

The UN food agency said the world faced a "silent tsunami" of soaring food prices that threaten to plunge more than 100 million people into hunger, leaving a \$755 million shortfall in its budget.

Americans Die Earlier

Researchers have found the unexpected in life expectancy: Unlike every other industrial country, the U.S. may have peaked at age 77 due to a sizable portion of rural areas without access to healthy foods or reliable healthcare, placing Americans behind Bosnia on this year's CIA World Factbook list.

Forced to Stay in Iraq

The Army has accelerated its policy of involuntary extensions of duty to bolster its troop levels, despite Defense Secretary Robert Gates' order last year to limit it, Pentagon records show. Since May of 2007, the number of soldiers forced to remain in the Army rose 43 percent to 12,235 in March.

Ancestry Investigated

State authorities on Monday began running DNA tests on over 400 children removed from a polygamist compound this month in west Texas to determine if some were born to underage mothers.

Iraqi Prisoners Released

More than a hundred detainees were released from Iraqi-run prison on Monday as part of the largest wave of releases since the war began. The government set men free to reintegrate those accused of relatively minor crimes and to ease the strains on a prison system operating well beyond its capacity.



PHOTO BY RAYMOND RENDELMAN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A newly installed green bike box, designed to provide more safety to bicyclists, gives Rod Bennett a space to wait his turn in traffic before proceeding through an intersection at Hawthorne Boulevard and Southeast 11th Avenue.

Drivers, Watch Out!

Traffic rules evolve as more cyclists share road

BY RAYMOND RENDELMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

With the deaths of two cyclists in bike lanes solidly etched into the city's collective memory, efforts are underway to leave no excuses for hitting people who aren't protected by a ton of steel.

The latest traffic-safety tool is a painted green box that's clearly marked for bicycles only at key intersections. The installations are designed to move motorists back a few feet so that they can see the two-wheeled commuters and avoid a blindsiding one in a right-hand collision.

Bike boxes come after the tragic deaths of two bicyclists last October, when young lives were crushed under the wheels of trucks turning right from intersections on West Burnside and North Interstate. The drivers said they didn't see them before it was too late.

Giving cyclists a legal and visible place to idle when waiting for a red light will not solve all the dangers for a growing population using alternative transportation, often due to financial constraints. Nor do the evolving traffic rules protect bicycling riders equally.

The Portland Office of Transportation has added bike boxes for Hawthorne Bridge and downtown commuters, for example, but not for

the bike-accessible Steel and Broadway bridges on the north side of town that have seen 30 percent increases in bike traffic over the past year when the Hawthorne saw 15 percent increases.

City Commissioner Sam Adams, whose staff oversees PDOT's efforts to encourage bike safety, acknowledges that problematic intersections across the city need redesign. Other efforts have been focused on education like "I Brake for People" and "See and Be Seen."

The huge explosion in growth of bicyclists is a good problem for Portland to have.

—Alison Hill Graves, outreach coordinator for northeast Portland's Community Cycling Center

More encouraging news comes from how the multiplying tens of thousands of bike commuters each day have not brought more fatalities over the years. One theory credits motorists with becoming for accustomed to looking out for bicyclists, especially where they can form more than 10 percent of the traffic on some streets and bridge

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Portland Development Commission on New Course

Reaches out to neighborhoods

BY RAYMOND RENDELMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Heads of the city's most powerful agency for change acknowledge their previous mistakes and vow to improve how the 50-year-old Portland Development Commission reaches out to neighborhoods.

A history of slash-and-rebuild-style urban renewal has created pockets of for-lease structures along with empty lots in many parts of town. Seeing the effects of drastic changes on neighborhoods, the development leaders are restructuring



Mark Rosenbaum, PDC chairman



Bruce Warner, PDC executive director

the organization to include the needs of current residents while remaining proactive about Portland's opportunities for housing and job creation.

"We've learned from those mistakes," Bruce Warner, executive director of PDC, told the Portland Observer. "Too much for many, many years there hasn't been engagement with the community talking about the priorities."

PDC's reorganization last week has the goal of making neighborhood-specific departments able to provide comprehensive plans, rather than requiring districts to rely on centralized housing and development departments.

The internal changes only provide the framework for what the organization hopes will create political impetus for transforming how projects are planned. The commission currently complains of tied hands when it comes to spreading wealth more evenly over various urban-renewal districts.

"The problem that PDC has inherently is that we're by law limited as to where we can spend our money," says Mark Rosenbaum, PDC chairman.

Meanwhile, existing tools of the agency to generate funds will continue to affect the city. Planned

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Wielding Influence on Public Policy

Commissioner gives voice to minority point of view

BY LEE PERLMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Portland Planning Commission could be considered the city's official "think tank."

Although the City Council has been known to modify or ignore its advice, the commission has great influence on decision-making. Its volunteer members receive briefings from public agencies, hold public hearings, conduct work sessions that have been known to last more than eight hours at a stretch, and make recommendations on matters of public policy.

Their latest assignment, courtesy of Mayor Tom Potter's office,

is ongoing review of the Portland Plan, the overdue update of the Portland Comprehensive Plan. This will mean consideration of a large number of interrelated issues and policies, some of them at odds with each other, to mark a coherent direction for the city.

In one of their newest members, Andre Baugh, they've got the right man for the job.

Baugh is not the first African-American to serve on the commission — James Harris and Ron Sykes have held positions there — but he is one of the few and at the moment the only one on that body.

His experience includes work as



Andre Baugh guides public policies as a member of the Portland Planning Commission.

the project manager of the Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard Redesign Project for the Portland Office of Transportation. Later, as a volunteer, he was one of the first to push the city in general and

the Portland Development Commission in particular, to work harder to recruit and retain minorities and women in building-trade apprentices, and to utilize minority and women contractors on city-fi-

nanced construction projects. "I don't think I'm representative of minorities, but I can give voice to a minority point of view," Baught told

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