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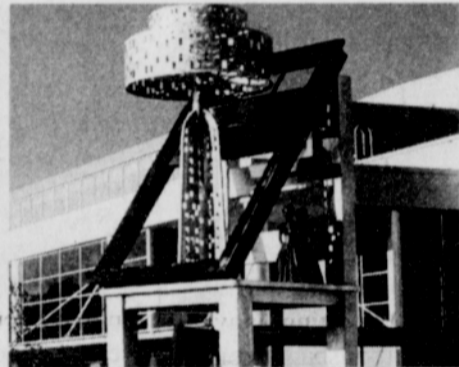
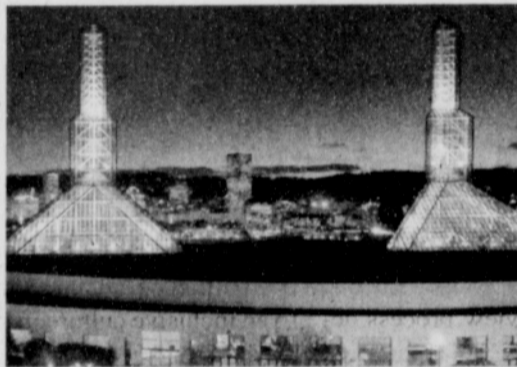
The purchase of day-to-day materials, equipment and services are managed independently by each venue according to MERC's purchasing and solicitation guidelines. When the agency seeks professional or consulting services that will benefit all its venues, the solicitation is managed by MERC's contracting and purchasing division. Additionally, construction and building project services are managed through solicitation by MERC Capital Construction Division.

Want to know more?

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Julie Hoffman
503.731.7905

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Heather Peck
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www.merc-facilities.org



Executive Directs Consumer Banking

Quentin Strode has been named regional manager for U.S. Bank Consumer Banking in the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area. He succeeds Tina Foster, who recently retired.

strategic thinker who will add significant value to the Western States Leadership Team."

Among the experiences Strode brings to the table include his ability to differentiate and distinguish a bank's brand and use that distinction to increase market share.

Strode previously was senior vice president and regional consumer executive for Bank of America in the north Texas and Midwest region where he oversaw the activities of banking centers stretching across the greater Dallas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas City and St. Louis areas. He previously was employed in managerial positions with First Interstate Bank and as an independent consultant.



Quentin Strode

"I am excited to have him lead our Portland-Vancouver market," said Ross Carey, western states division manager for U.S. Bank Consumer Banking. "He is a developer of leaders, strong community advocate and a sound

Seattle in 2001. He was a member of the corporate advisory board of the Greater Los Angeles African American Chamber of Commerce.

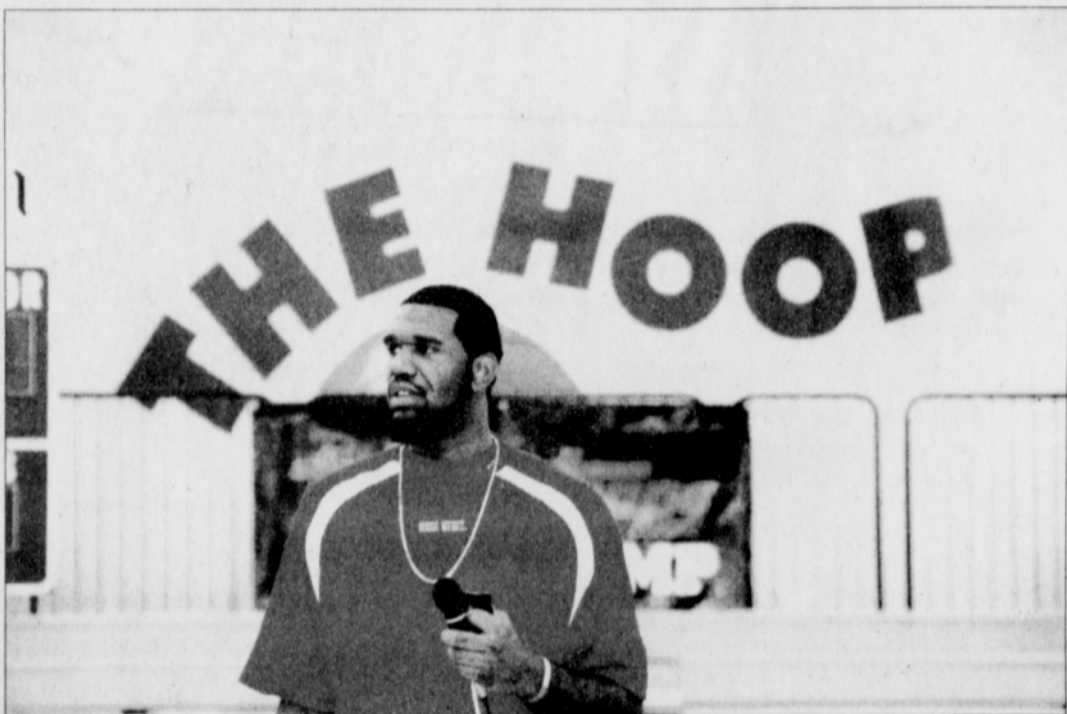


PHOTO BY MICHAEL TILLERY

No. 1 2007 NBA draft pick Greg Oden at the recent Topps camp for boys and girls at the Hoop facility in Beaverton.

Oden Ready for First Season

'Rookie of the Year' one of his goals

(AP) -- He was drafted more than 14 months ago, and even then he looked too old to be a first-year player, so it's easy to forget that Greg Oden is technically a rookie.

Sidelined all season after knee surgery, the top pick in the 2007 draft never got to compete with No. 2 selection Kevin Durant for the Rookie of the Year award. So he's eligible to win it this year, and that's one of his goals.

"I hope so," Oden said Thursday. "I'm working for it."

The Portland center definitely feels like a newcomer this week, joining a number of first-year players in the league's rookie transition program, a four-day event where players are counseled on is-

sues they will face on and off the court.

Players are given three years to complete the program, in case they are unavailable in the summer before they enter the NBA. Oden couldn't come last year because it started just days after he had microfracture surgery on his right knee.

He finally began taking part in 5-on-5 drills last week, playing twice with his Trail Blazers teammates, and seemed pleased with his progress.

"When I first came back to Portland, I came back about three weeks ago, and I was a little bit nervous getting in there and starting working out with the guys," Oden said. "I was nervous about how I was going to play, but the more I got to playing, it's just about going out there and playing the game I love, so it's not really anything to be nervous about."

For now, he doesn't think the Blazers will let him do too

much more. "I don't think they're going to do that until the season starts," he said. "They're trying to make sure nothing happens, so keeping me on a tight rope right now."

Oden has already experienced plenty in the NBA, traveling with the Blazers on three long road trips last season. He said he's learned much more in the transition program, such as the services provided by the players' association and some financial lessons.

Oden, growing out his beard and looking far older than his 20 years, is already aware there are no guarantees. Still, he won't have to worry about playing time once he's fully recovered.

"It took a couple of days, but it felt good," he said of facing live competition again. "The second day it felt a lot better, but I'm still not quite back yet."

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Marcus C. Mundy,
President of Urban League



Urban League
of Portland

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