



Spring Forward

Daylight savings
time begins at 2
a.m. on Sunday

Ashanti at the Beach

Grammy award winner
sets two concert dates at
Chinook Winds
See Arts & Entertainment, page A11



The Portland Observer

'City of Roses'

Volume XXXIV, Number 9

Established in 1970

Committed to Cultural Diversity

www.portlandobserver.com

Wednesday • March 4, 2009

Shining Light on Prisons

Shields insists lockup measures address race

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

For decades, Oregon's small minority population has made up a disproportionate amount of the state prison population. It's a shame that doesn't get much attention when tougher sentencing laws are enacted.

African Americans make up nearly 10 percent of the state's prison population, even though they are about 2 percent of the population. Hispanics make up over 12 percent of state prisoners, out of a population of about 10 percent.

State Rep. Chip Shields, D-Portland, is hoping to bring greater attention to the disparities, and make the public and other lawmakers think twice before enacting future measures that seek to crack down on crime.

Shields has introduced House Bill 2352, which requires the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission to issue a racial and ethnic impact statement of any change in sentencing policy put before voters or the Legislature.

He is hoping that the statements will make lawmakers and the public more informed on some of the negative impacts tougher sentencing laws bring to ethnic communities and consider alternatives, like increasing funding for treatment and social services.

"We'll go in with open eyes," said Shields.

A racial and ethnic impact statement would be similar to an environmental or fiscal impact statement. Analysts would look at the current numbers of inmates imprisoned for crimes targeted by a new sentencing policy, and then make an estimate on how they'll be affected.

Shields said the bill has not been analyzed for how much it will cost.

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Executive on a Mission

Spirit Mountain's Rodney Ferguson has big dreams

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Spirit Mountain Casino boasts "a game for every player." It has Vegas-style poker, Texas hold 'em, card tournaments, slots, and even bingo and keno.

But Rodney Ferguson, the recently named chief executive officer of Spirit Mountain, has even bigger dreams for what's already considered Oregon's number one tourist attraction.

"I want to make it the premiere entertainment destination in the Northwest," said Ferguson.

The vision includes a new spa, swimming pool facility, an 18-hole golf course, a night club, concerts and boxing matches, amenities for the Grande Ronde casino that will bring in families as well as businesses looking for a spot to hold retreats and conferences.

The 52-year-old Virginia native has a long history of managing and expanding businesses.

After graduating in 1978 with a degree in accounting from Virginia State University, Ferguson worked as an auditor for PricewaterhouseCooper, an international accounting firm.

He went on to work for Harrah's Marina Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City. He then worked for "The Donald" as a financial controller at the Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino.

Ferguson said he met Trump while working in his sprawling business empire, and described him as "very high energy" and not deviating much from the persona he projects on television. He also had a stint with his own accounting firm in Atlantic City, N.J.

His last gig was general manager of the Isleta Casino and Resort in Albuquerque, N.M. During his five year stint at Isleta he turned the casino into a full-service resort with a golf course, family entertainment center, bowling alley, RV park, music park, and campground.

From his long business career,

continued ▼ on page A8

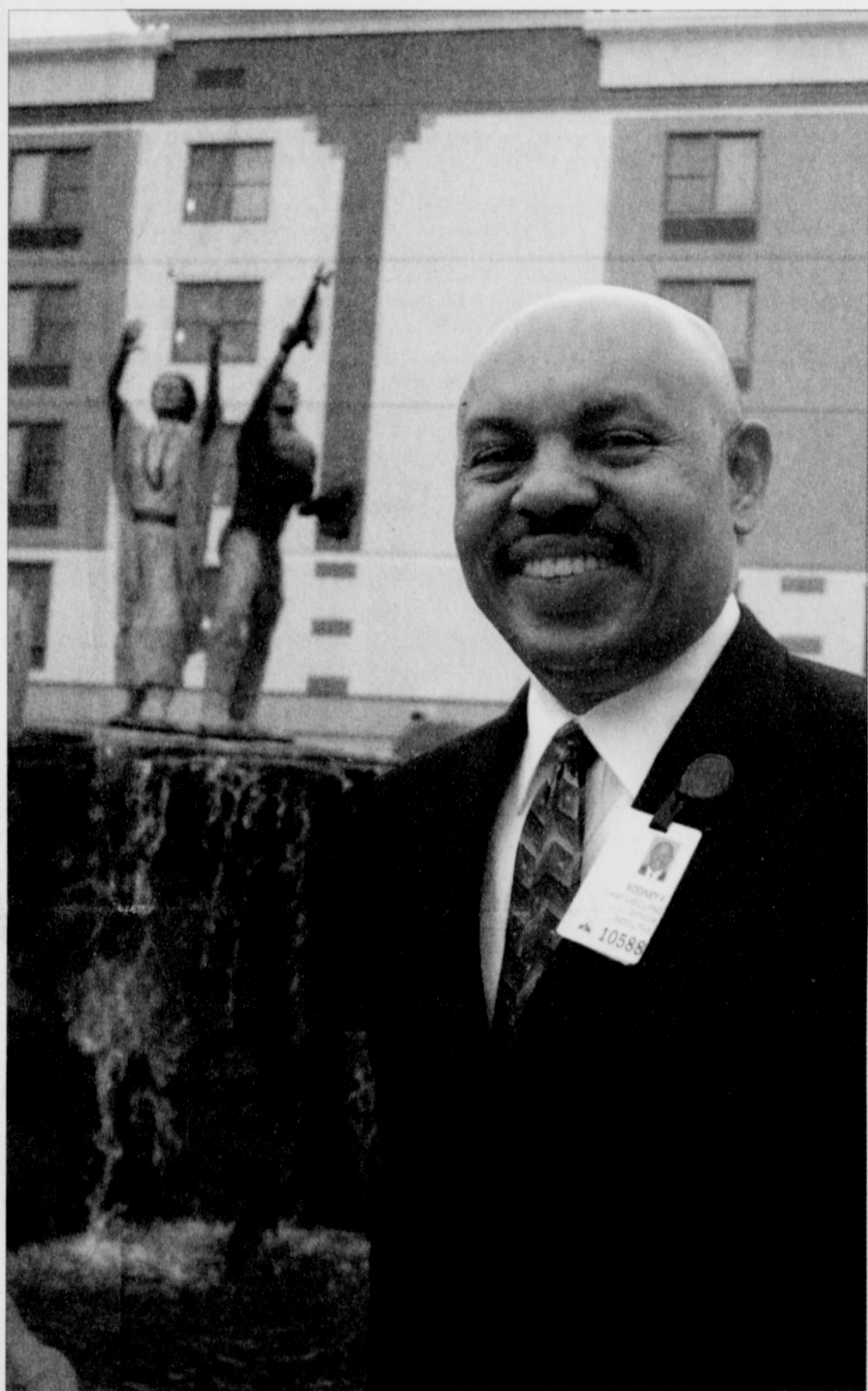


PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Rodney Ferguson, the new chief executive officer of Spirit Mountain Casino in Grande Ronde, wants to make Oregon's number one tourist attraction the premiere entertainment destination in the Northwest.

Race Discrimination Lawsuit Settled

PSU pays former administrator \$795,000

Portland State University's former vice provost of student affairs has received a \$795,000 settlement from the school, concluding a four-year legal battle alleging racial discrimination.

Douglas Samuels charged that the university violated his civil rights when it demoted him to a teaching post and claimed he was subject to inequitable treatment in terms of pay,

committee assignments and job responsibilities during his four years of employment at PSU.

"I hope this settlement will be a healing milestone for both Portland State and my family," said Samuels, who lives in Southwest Washington with his wife and their three children. "This has been a significant professional and financial

I hope this settlement will be a healing milestone for both Portland State and my family.

—Douglas Samuels

hardship, and I'm looking forward to resuming my career working with university students."

PSU admitted no wrongdoing in agreeing to pay the settlement. University officials said discrimination

lawsuits are handled by the Oregon Department of Justice and in this case the Oregon Dept. of Administrative Services advised settlement. PSU had no further comment.

Samuels was hired at PSU in 2001 to oversee records, registration, financial aid, educational opportunity programs, student academic advising and support services, career services, student activities, leadership programs, and other responsibilities.

Previously, he had been associate dean of student affairs and diversity at Vermont Law School.

His hiring came after a Campus Climate Study report to former PSU President Daniel O. Bernstine addressed the university's lack of diversity with no persons of color in senior administrative positions other than President Bernstine and the PSU dean of social work.

"Portland State had a reputation as a very hostile working environment

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Week in The Review

Confident on Reforms

President Barack Obama expressed confidence on Tuesday his economic reforms would work as senior officials began lobbying Congress to support the administration's jaw-dropping budget proposal.

Local Leaders Stand Up

The Portland branch of the NAACP stood up against a racist cartoon seen



Rihanna, Brown Reunite

Rihanna may have spent the weekend in Miami with Chris Brown, but her family isn't quite ready for the tumultuous couple to reunite. "Everyone wants them to take a break, to cool off," a relative of Rihanna tells People Magazine. "No one wants them back

together."

NFL Players Still Missing

The Coast Guard on Tuesday stopped searching for two NFL players and a



third man lost off the Florida coast. Oakland linebacker Marquis Cooper, free-agent Corey Smith and former South Florida player William Bleakley, had been missing since Saturday when their boat capsized.

Oregon Economy Sinks

Oregon's unemployment rate has risen to 9.9 percent as the state's economy sinks faster than the nation's as a whole. The state Employment Department says joblessness hasn't been so high, since 1984. See story, page A2.

County Expects Layoffs

Multnomah County expects to lay off some employees by month's end. That's

the word from county Chair Ted Wheeler, who sent out a memo to county employees Tuesday. He did not say how many positions would be eliminated.

39 years of community service