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## Baby Cut from Womb

A Beaverton woman is charged in the murder of a pregnant woman  
See story, page A2

## Tourney Brings Top Hoop Stars

Rose City Showcase kicks off Friday at Lewis and Clark College  
See story, page A9



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## Green Economy or Green Divide?

### Workers face many obstacles

BY JAKE THOMAS  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

On a hot, muggy day outside of Rigler Elementary School in northeast Portland the leather boots and jeans of four Hispanic immigrants pick up dust as they work to fill a layered pit with carefully placed rocks and gravel.

The men are constructing a bioswale, a landscape element that filters pollution from runoff water. They are participants in a landscape training program sponsored by Verde, a non-profit that helps low-income people develop skills that will help them land jobs in the coming "green economy," or even start their own business.

Green jobs have been hailed as a way to revitalize the economy while protecting the natural world. Some are pinning their hopes that these jobs will be a vehicle of social



Workers stand near a bioswale, a form of "green" environmental construction meant to catch polluted rain water outside of Rigler Elementary School in northeast Portland. The men are in a program offered by Verde, a non-profit that offers green landscape training to traditionally marginalized groups.

mobility for traditionally disadvantaged groups. But as the green tide washes over the country there are still obstacles to ensure that it lifts up previously marginalized people.

It's not clear what the potential green jobs might hold, in part, because there is no common definition of what a green job entails. But in terms of the new economy, the work often includes jobs to create renewable energy, or traditional blue collar jobs that have an eco-friendly element.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, generation of renewable energy is slated to rise from 418 billion kilowatt hours to 730 billion by 2030, which will certainly create some jobs.

Some are hoping that green jobs will be a boon to communities of color, which already make less than their white counterparts. According to the Urban Institute, a third of all families with children are in poverty and the median wage for black men was \$12.48 an hour in 2005 compared to \$17.48 for whites.

The Obama Administration and Congress are pinning their

hopes that a green economy will revitalize the country's battered middle class and will provide greater social mobility for the poor. This year's stimulus package included millions of dollars in tax credits to spur green technology, and the Obama Administration has launched initiatives to connect residents of HUD housing with training for green jobs, although they have yet to be spelled out.

The state of Oregon is also on board. It has mandated that 25 percent of all energy come from renewable energy by 2025, and offers tax credits to encourage businesses ranging from homebuilding to hybrid vehicles to become more eco-friendly. Local leaders are also in the process of wooing clean energy companies to join the ranks of existing companies, like the Hillsboro-based Solar World.

While these jobs are being created there are a number of organizations, local and national, that want to make sure that disadvantaged groups will be prepared to hitch their wagons to the green gravy train.

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## Rebuilding Center Reshapes Our Thinking

### Mississippi non-profit celebrates 10 years

BY JAKE THOMAS  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

At the ReBuilding Center on Mississippi Avenue sounds of people lifting, dragging, and dropping heavy construction materials echoes through the sprawling complex over the softly blaring soul music playing in the background.

People lug hulking doors, dig through bins of lamp fixtures, and inquisitively gaze at windows.

This looks like it could be any other supply stop for home refurbishment, but it isn't.

The ReBuilding Center is part of the non-profit Our United Villages, seeks to reshape the way people think about objects and how they put together houses.

The center champions the concept of "deconstruction," which

means building materials shouldn't be tossed once a building is taken down, but reused. It has grown steadily from its humble beginning in a small storefront to becoming one of the nation's largest non-profit reuse centers.

On Thursday June 11, the center at 3625 N. Mississippi Ave., will celebrate its 10th birthday from 6 to 8 p.m. It will include food from local vendors and will showcase some of the special projects that have been created with recycled materials.

Two hundred people are served and eight tons of waste are diverted everyday by the ReBuilding Center said Chris Bekemeier, the assistant director for Our United Villages.

The idea behind the center is



Chris Bekemeier of Our United Villages shows off some of the salvaged plumbing fixtures at the ReBuilding Center on North Mississippi Avenue, the non-profit warehouse of building supplies obtained for resale and reuse.

simple: The cycle of people filling landfills with usable items while buying new ones is wasteful and doesn't utilize peoples' creativity, explained Bekemeier.

"Portland is so full of creative people that there is no end to ideas people come up with that people never thought of before," said Bekemeier, who has seen people construct greenhouses,

chicken coops, and almost entire houses by creatively using salvaged wood, doors, windows, plumbing and light fixtures. Often times building materials are used for something

other than their intended purpose, said Bekemeier. For instance, a door can become a floor board, or a window a mirror.

She adds that reusing an object honors the place it once had in someone's life.

"That beautiful lamp shade that was in grandma's house that lit up their life for decades is thrown away; it's sad," she said.

Salvaged materials tend to be cheaper than brand new ones by 50 to 90 percent, said Bekemeier who can vouch for the soundness of every object in the 52,500 square foot warehouse.

"The hazardous stuff is what I'm looking for," said Angel Bean, a salvage specialist who scours donated material for rot, mold lead-based paint, and anything that might make it unsafe.

The mission of the center also extends beyond objects to people. Our United Villages, the

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## Grant Junior Rules Roseria

Rachel Seeman of Grant High School made history Saturday, becoming the first Rose Festival queen from her northeast Portland school in 43 years.

In a ceremony at Memorial Coliseum, Seeman, learned she had been chosen queen. A Grant High School student hasn't held that honor since 1966.

One of three juniors on the Portland Rose Festival Court, Seeman said she was shocked, excited and amazed.

She plans to go to college after she graduates from high school and go into the medical field.

Seeman and her court rode in the Grand Floral Parade in a horse-drawn wagon

The 2009 court includes 14 princesses, each representing an area school.

Last year, festival organizers made some changes to the court selection process — they broadened the court to include a stu-



Rachel Seeman of Grant High School is the first Rose Festival Queen from the northeast Portland school since 1966.

dent outside the regular participating high schools and princesses were selected by a judging panel instead of by each school's student body.

## Parking Taken, Neighbors Stunned

Residents of a local senior and disabled housing complex are smarting after all the curbside parking spaces across the street from their northeast Portland apartment were suddenly taken away with no opportunity to participate in the decision.

The parking on Northeast Sixth Avenue across from the Walnut Park Apartments was recently marked with new signs that say "Reserved for Police Vehicles Only." The entire block between Roselawn and Emerson Avenues was impacted by the action.

Portland Transportation Department officials said the restrictions went up at the request of the nearby Northeast Police Precinct which said it needed 40 spaces to make room for its merger with the North Precinct.

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"Reserved for police vehicles only" takes up a block of Northeast Sixth Avenue across from the Walnut Park senior and disabled housing complex. The residents are upset, but officials say they have no standing in the decision.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

## Week in The Review

**Tax Measures Approved**  
Measures to raise taxes on Oregon corporations and people in upper income brackets have been narrowly approved by the Oregon House.

Both bills now move to the Oregon Senate.

### Blues Queen Remembered

Koko Taylor, a blues musician popularly known as the "Queen of the Blues" died on June 3 after



complications from surgery for gastrointestinal bleeding. Taylor, 80, was known primarily for her rough powerful vocals and traditional blues stylings.

### Pump Prices on Rise

If you've hit the pump recently, your pocketbook has probably noticed: gas prices are going up. Across the country, prices

have jumped 30 to 40 cents in the past month. In Oregon, the average price for a gallon of regular rose last week to \$2.68.

39 years of community service