

Pandemic!

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A key component of the state's plan is the distribution of a H1N1 flu vaccine that will likely be approved by the FDA this fall. It will be distributed to an unprecedented

The federal government has purchased the H1N1 vaccine and will distribute it through local health departments. The state will monitor the vaccine for any side effects. Throughout the summit, of-

Business owners were advised to develop a plan to keep afloat during the pandemic, which might involve flex time or telecommuting.

Sandra McDonough of the Portland Business Alliance, citing figures from the Mexico City Chamber of Commerce, said that the city lost \$58 million dollars a day last spring when it had to shut down over fears of H1N1 virus spreading.

State Superintendent of Public Education Susan Castillo, said that schools will also be a place where the virus is spread, and stressed that sick children should stay home, and that public schools would be working closely with local health departments.

“Our schools have a vital role in helping prevent the spread of the disease,” she said. “That’s where the kids are and we know how good kids are at spreading germs.”

The state’s biggest challenge may come in preparing the most

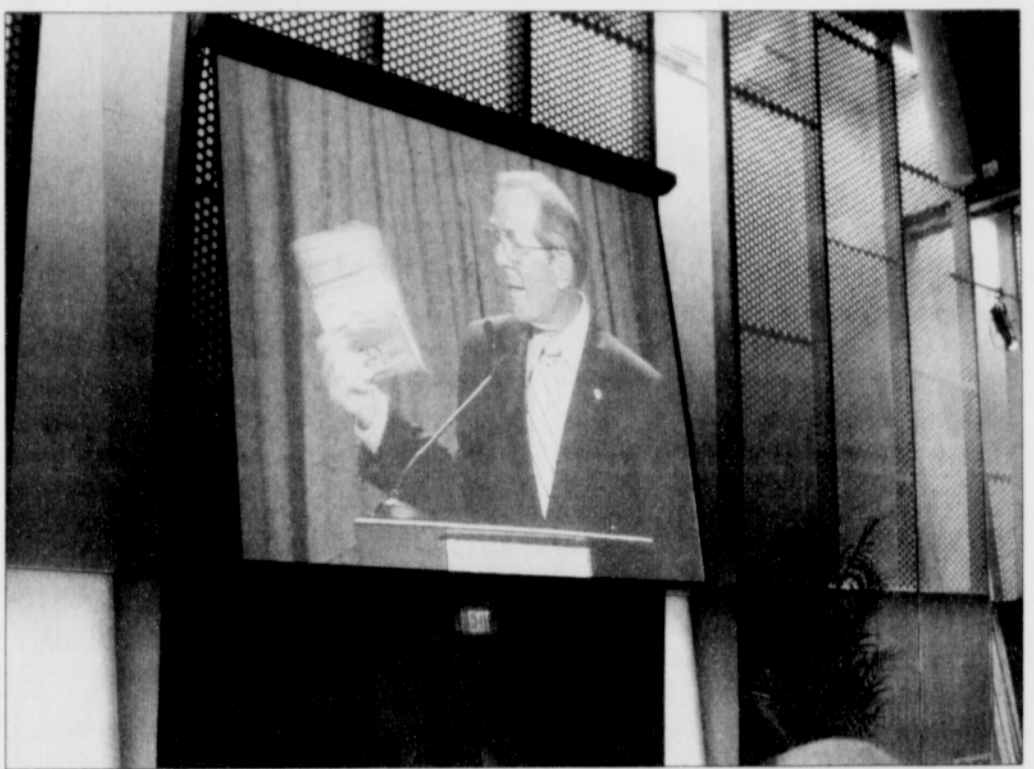


PHOTO BY JAKE THOMAS/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Gov. Ted Kulongoski announces a statewide strategy to deal with the H1N1 virus to a crowd of health professionals from across the state. He holds a copy of John M. Barry’s “The Great Influenza,” a book about the 1918 flu pandemic that killed millions.

Our schools have a vital role in helping prevent the spread of the disease. That’s where the kids are and we know how good kids are at spreading germs. — State Superintendent of Public Education Susan Castillo

two million people throughout the state. It will target pregnant women, people who live with or care for infants, health care workers, and people between six months through 64 years of age.

“This is unprecedented,” said Paul Cieslak, medical director for the state’s immunization program. “We’ll really need all hands on deck to make it hap-

pen.” officials stressed that people who experience flu-like symptoms should not come into work or school.

Keeping sick people at home is considered one of the most difficult parts of preventing the spread of the virus since workers and employers alike will likely be reluctant to slow down work during a struggling economy.

vulnerable and disadvantaged for the pandemic.

A 2008 state report on pandemic preparedness states that people in group homes and assisted-living facilities are at a greater risk, and additional planning might be re-

quired to meet the needs of these populations.

At one point during the summit, officials were asked during a question period about plans to help prepare the poor and minorities. Kohn responded that most local health depart-

ments would be handling this issue.

But throughout the summit officials stressed a simple, yet effective, strategy in preventing the spread of the virus: wash your hands and cover your mouth when you cough.

Fight for Equity

continued **▲ from Front**

seven community schools that will serve 1,100 to 1,400 students in addition to magnet and alternative programs. Course offerings will be largely consistent at each neighborhood school. The open transfer policy will also become a thing of the past.

Also included in the plan are three to six magnet schools. Their sizes will range from 300 to 1,000 students, and will be open to enrollment from across the district.

“Some students really do truly benefit from smaller schools,” said Singer of why smaller schools were included as an option.

Carlin Ames also noted that the redesign isn’t aimed solely at solving the problems of smaller struggling schools, but also some of the inadequacies at better-performing schools.

“The graduation rates are not what they should be at any of our high schools,” she said.

As proposed, between one to three neighborhoods would have its high school converted into magnets or face closure, which will certainly face community backlash.

Carlin Ames is quick to point out that smaller schools that have drastically lost their student population

won’t be the first on the cutting block. Instead, a holistic set of factors will be taken into account, like the school’s proximity to public transportation, and others that are still being determined.

She also stressed that PPS will be conducting community outreach to get a sense of what the conversion of a neighborhood school to a magnet might mean.

PPS has yet to hammer out many of the details involved with the redesign, like what the themes of each magnet school will be, how programs at existing schools will be affected, and long range planning for facilities. These issues will be resolved in the fall, after soliciting public input, which could cause some hiccups for the process.

Carlin Ames admits that PPS has hastily implemented top-down changes in the past, such as the reconfiguration of some middle schools to Kindergarten through 8th Grade programs, and those actions have bred community distrust.

“There have been a lot of things done to the community and not done with the community over time,” she said. “There is nothing people care about more than schools.”



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A \$2.85 million renovation is coming to North Denver Avenue, the Kenton Neighborhood’s historic Main Street.

Kenton Street to Get Makeover

A streetscape makeover is coming to the Kenton Neighborhood of north Portland as a full range of improvements begin on North Denver Avenue, the historic community’s main street.

Construction is expected to begin early next month on renovating a 4.5-block stretch of Denver from Interstate Avenue south to Watts Street.

The improvements include wider sidewalks, new street trees, storm

water planters, pedestrian lighting, concrete street resurfacing, a granite public art sculpture and seven carved stone benches.

The \$2.85 million North Denver Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project is funded by the Portland Development Commission in coordination with the Portland Bureau of Transportation.

The city has been working with local businesses, community representatives, and technical experts since

2006 to plan the right mix of attractive, functional improvements.

The project exemplifies the vision of 20-minute neighborhoods called out as a key element of the city’s new economic development strategy.

Related revitalization projects include Multnomah County’s remodeling of commercial space at 8226 N. Denver for a new library branch; renovation of the iconic Paul Bunyan statue; and the opening of new businesses in the neighborhood.

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