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# Fred Meyer

What's on your list today?.

## LOCAL NEWS



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Salina Harris (center) speaks out against youth gang violence. A mother of gang-violence shooting victim Andre Payton, she was joined at Friday's news conference by Mayor Sam Adams, Police Chief Mike Reese, District Attorney Mike Shrunck and other officials who announced the reintroduction of a gun task force to recover and reduce the availability of firearms to youth and felons.

### A Mother's Plea

#### Gang violence brings unified response

"I never thought I would standing here as the parent of a murdered child," Salina Harris told reporters during a news conference Friday in northeast Portland. Harris is the mother of 19-year-old Andre Payton, who was killed downtown on Sept. 26 in a drive-by shooting, the victim of gang violence.

"Our children who grew up together are now shooting at, injuring and murdering each other," she said. "As a community we need to help the police stop this violence."

Harris was joined by Mayor Sam Adams, Portland Police Chief Mike Reese, Multnomah County District Attorney Mike Shrunck, acting U.S. Attorney Dwight Holton and other

officials, who jointly announced the formation of a new gun violence-focused police task force.

Payton's death – and a related gang shooting following his funeral – are a part of an increase in Portland-area violence; more than 70 gang-related shootings have been reported in Portland so far this year, an increase over 2009's 68 incidents. The new Portland Police Gun Task Force will work toward reducing gun violence through the recovery of illegally possessed firearms.

The Gun Task Force was also created to work alongside the recently resurrected Portland Police Bureau's Gang Enforcement Team, which had been disbanded 3 years ago due to bureau budget cuts. The Gang Enforcement Team – which includes the Gang Violence Reduction Team (GVRT) that is in charge of both shooting cases – investigates gang-related shooting and violence crimes, but is

not focused on gun-specific crimes.

Combined, the units are investigating all aspects of gang activities, from prevention to apprehension, to better serve victims and families of gang-related crimes, like Harris. Despite dozens of witnesses to her son's death, no suspects have materialized.

Harris urges witnesses to the shooting to come forward. The African American Chamber of Commerce of Oregon, in partnership with the Oregon NW Chapter of National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives are offering a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction in Payton's murder.

"As a community, it is our responsibility to come together to help the Police solve these crimes and prevent future violence," Harris said. "I want to be the last member of the moms of Murdered Children Club."

### Obama Campaigns for Kitzhaber

President Barack Obama is arriving in Portland Wednesday, Oct. 20 to headline a campaign event for Oregon gubernatorial candidate John Kitzhaber.

The Democrat and former two-term governor is hoping to boost support with the president's pres-

ence. Kitzhaber is in a tight race against political newcomer and former Trail Blazer Chris Dudley. The latest poll results show Kitzhaber is leading Dudley, but by only two percentage points.

The candidates faced off in their only televised debate last week,

focusing on their proposals to fix Oregon's economy and high unemployment rate.

The Obama-Kitzhaber rally, held at the Oregon Convention Center, is slated to begin at 6 p.m., with the president arriving via Air Force One at 5:30 p.m.