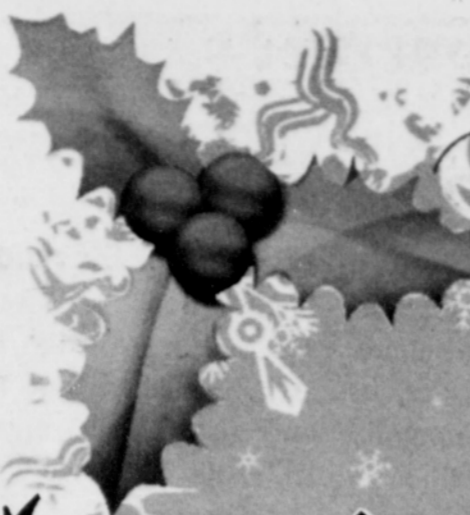




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Merry Christmas
and Happy Kwanzaa

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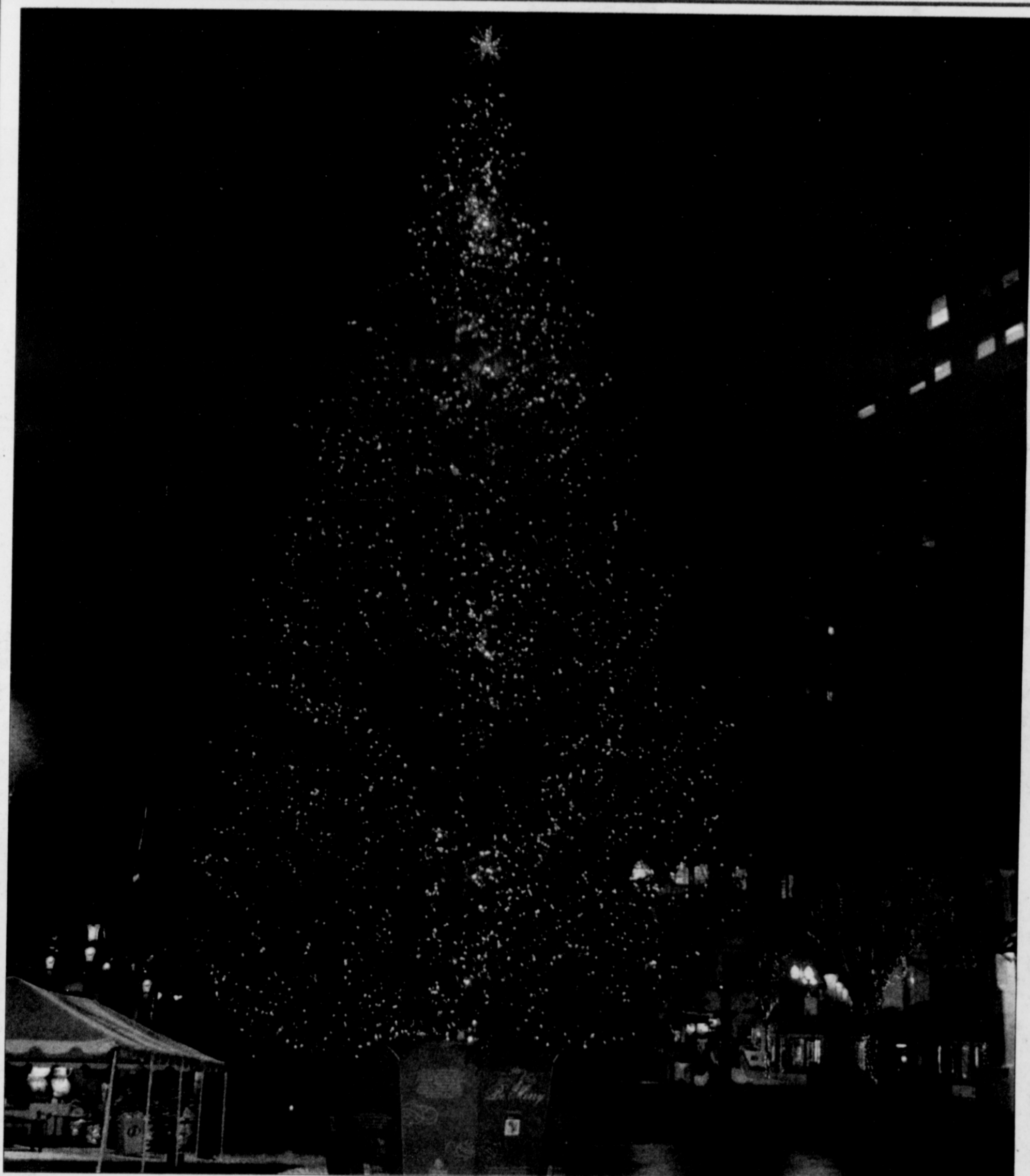


photo by Mark Washington/The Portland Observer

Holiday Traditions

Portland's holiday tree at Pioneer Courthouse Square glows with the twinkle of lights.

Double Blow

Power rates soar while energy assistance is cut

Electrical power rates are about to increase by double digits for customers of Pacific Power and to a lesser degree for Portland General Electric just as residents and businesses brace for the higher bills of winter.

For disadvantaged residents, the higher costs come just as local agencies are announcing an anticipated 59-percent reduction of federal energy assistance dollars in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Six local provider agencies of the LIHEAP funds held a news conference last week outlying the harm such a heating assistance reduction will have on local populations.

"Hard working Oregonians and their families deserve to be in homes that are warm and safe during the coldest time of the year," said Kimberly Black of Self Enhancement, Inc. Some of the other local providers and non-profits urging action at the news conference were Impact NW, Human Solutions, the Native American Youth Family Center, Catholic Charities and Neighborhood House.

The loss of energy assistance to low income families can cause people to suffer in cold homes, adding to their health concerns, and create added fire dangers, when heating with such dangerous appliances as electrical space heaters, propane heaters and fireplaces.

The local organizations are ask-

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