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Are we Earthquake Proof?



The Fremont Bridges built prior to 1994, the first year ODOT adopted rigorous seismic design codes, are most vulnerable to collapse, though a few bridges were retrofitted in 1988. There is no current funding for a bridge retrofit program in ODOT. See more on page 10, inside

Joyce Washington
High School Classic
Basketball charity
games to feature best
of Portland
 See Section B, inside



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'City of Roses'



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years of
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Non Profit Spins Wheels of Life

High gas prices empower cycling explosion

BY MINDY COOPER
 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Throughout the nation frustrated drivers are pulling into gas stations with fuel prices the highest they have been in almost three years. Gas station signs read \$4 a gallon and no one seems to know when or how the prices will go back down to normal.

While many Portlanders are reorganizing their lives, trying to find a solution to the highest gas prices they have seen since 2008, many are realizing that bicycling around town could be just the answer.

The Community Cycling Center, located at 1700 N.E. Alberta St., is determined to help the community have easy access to the benefits of riding bicycles throughout the city.

Founded in 1994, the organization is one of the oldest bicycling non-profits in the United States and has helped thousands of people throughout the Portland area.

The center is celebrating a recent expansion and remodeling of their space, which allows an increase in their ability to connect with even more people and the growing number of bicycle commuters.

Alison Hill Graves, the cycling center's executive director, said you don't need to know anything about bikes to feel comfortable in their shop. While a lot of bike shops target specific kinds of bicycles, their main priority is to cater to the people.

"Everyone deserves to walk into a bike shop and feel welcomed," she said. "And with the additional space we can actually build more bikes for our programs."

According to Graves, 40 percent of all car



PHOTO BY MINDY COOPER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Mychal Tetteh is the director of Operations for the non-profit Community Cycling Center on Northeast Alberta Street. The bike shop is celebrating a remodel and expansion, which will allow for more volunteer programs and community outreach.

trips within the city are two-miles and under, a relatively short distance that produces the most pollution.

"Those are also the easiest to convert to bike trips," she said.

The cycling center receives its funds from their small bike shop revenue, as well as individual donors, grants and sponsorships. More than 50 volunteers helped with planning, construction, deconstruction, logistics and the artful signage of the expansion, explained Graves.

The extra space expands their volunteer program, including a free workshop every first Tuesday of the month teaching community members how to fix their own bikes.

Mychal Tetteh, who has been the Director of Operations at the bike shop since 2009, said the expansion will also help increase the opportunity for more classes, including the maintenance class, to run simultaneously, which will allow the cycling center to reach a larger number of people more frequently.

"We may see a return of the volume of traffic in the bike shop that is similar to what we saw in 2008, which is the last time gas rose to proportions we see now," said Tetteh.

The high cost of running automobiles is obviously making more people consider the benefits of using a bike.

According to the latest Kelley Blue Book Market Intelligence survey, 84 percent of respondents said that fuel costs are influencing their car-buying process, and 90 percent expect gas prices to continue to rise.

"Folks are going to be looking for ways to save money and travel without driving," said Tetteh. "In the short term you might spend money to get your bike fixed, but over the course of the summer you will save money and be healthy."

continued ▼ on page 10

Pressure Builds for Higher Rents

Few rental vacancies add to housing woes

BY MINDY COOPER
 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland has the lowest rental vacancy rate for any metro area in the country, which could mean higher rent and less affordable housing, according to the figures released this month by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Beginning with the housing crisis, a trend of falling wages

and high unemployment spread throughout the country. In response to these changing economic conditions, many Oregonians re-organized their lives to find housing that better suits their lifestyles, and for many, this meant renting an apartment.

But with a current rental vacancy rate of just four percent, Portland has now become the nation's tightest apartment market out of the 75 metropolitan areas, widening the pool of people who must struggle to find affordable housing.

continued ▼ on page 18