

# The INSIDE

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# Fred Meyer

What's on your list today?

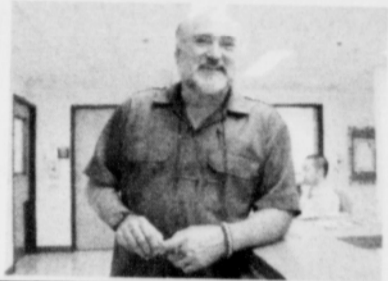
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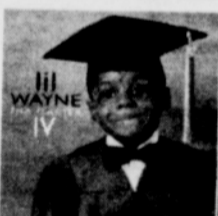
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# LOCAL NEWS

## Hunger Rate Remains High

### Increased poverty also adds to state's woes

Oregon's hunger rate remains high while poverty is getting worse in the state, according to new data from the Census Bureau.

Poverty in Oregon rose from 11.7 percent in 2007-08 to 13.8 percent in 2009-10. Nationally, poverty increased 1.9 percentage points to 14.7 percent over the same time periods.

Rising poverty hurts the state's economy, preventing millions of adults and children from reaching their potential and creating greater social costs down the road, according to the Oregon Center for Public Policy, a non-partisan research institute on budget, tax and economic issues.

The Census Bureau measures food insecurity through a series of survey questions that ask about the ability of households to obtain enough food for an active, healthy life for all members.

About 13.7 percent of Oregon households - more than 500,000 people - suffered food insecurity in the most recent figures, meaning they lacked consistent access to adequate amounts of nutritious food. That compares to 13.9 percent during the 2007-09 period.

More than 223,000 individuals,

suffered very low food security - also known as hunger - in 2008-2010. They ate less, skipped meals or sometimes went without food for entire days. That remains statistically equivalent to the 6.6 percent rate for 2007-09.



Rachel Bristol

Rachel Bristol, chief executive officer of the Oregon Food Bank, said Oregon was able to hold the line on food insecurity rates because of a collaborate effort of state agencies, non-profits and community volunteers to enroll eligible families in critical federal food and nutrition programs.

"For example, 1 in 5 Oregon households participate in SNAP (food stamps) (compared to 1 in 7 nationally), and 65 percent of our kids who are eligible are now receiving free or reduced price lunches," Bristol said. "Federal stimulus funding provided record levels of nutritious foods for emergency food boxes distributed by the Oregon Food Bank Network as more families lost homes to foreclosure and

ran out of unemployment benefits."

Professor Mark Edwards at Oregon State University also credited efforts at signing up people for food stamps to keep Oregon's hunger rate lower than predicted.

"While Oregon's hunger rate is disturbingly high, we know it could have been much worse," Edwards said.

He said Oregon's hunger rate increased from 4 percent to 6.6 percent between 2003 and 2007 but has remained steady - in the low 6s - while the U.S. rate has slowly and steadily increased over that time.

The conditions in the rest of the country in the past few years deteriorated to an even greater degree than in Oregon, bringing the national numbers closer to Oregon's high numbers," he said.

In the upcoming months, Congress will make decisions during debt discussion about federal nutrition programs that affect Oregon.

"We continue to see evidence of the struggles facing many people in our state," said Patti Whitney-Wise, executive director, Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon.

"Congress must support job creation while protecting our nation's safety net against deficit cutting measures," she said.

## Hip-Hop Charter Not Fit to Open

Just three days before it was set to open, district officials shut down the REAL Prep Charter School, a new public high school designed with a hip-hop themed curriculum.

The school hoped to open Monday in the Peal District serving 160 students in grades 9 through 12, but after school leaders spent \$500,000 in federal grants to get the program up and running, they

still lacked basic needs for students—desks, a curriculum, recording equipment, and a solid administrative team.

With only 48 students enrolled and not enough to show that its leaders were financially and logistically capable of opening, Sue Ann Higgins, Portland Public Schools executive director for education options, said the school, was not equipped to serve students.

The Portland School board approved a charter for REAL Prep in December 2009 based on its innovative approach, promising curriculum plans, solid community support and mission to serve underserved students in Portland.

PPS staff members are now contacting the students and families who have enrolled to help them find another school to attend.

## Police Sergeant Fired for Road Rage

Sgt. Scott Westerman, a Portland Police officer, was fired for violating Police Bureau policies on two road rage incidents, involving the same victims in January 2010.

In a statement Friday, Portland Police Chief Michael Reese said he had determined that Westerman had violated two specific direc-

tives and that termination of his employment is the appropriate level of discipline.

Westerman was off-duty and in his personal car when he pulled in front of a local motorist, the same woman from both incidents in northeast and southwest Portland, got out of his car and began screaming

at the victim. The woman called 911 both times before filing an official report.

The head of the Portland's police union for 17 months and with the Police Bureau for 19 years, Westerman apologized and claimed he was dealing with "personal issues" at the time.