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Lowest Wage to Rise

Inflation boosts minimum; small businesses prepare

BY MINDY COOPER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Inflation will push up Oregon's minimum wage by 30 cents to \$8.80 per hour in January.

"Safeguarding the wages of low-income workers is especially critical in a tough economy," said State Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian, announcing the new minimum wage rate last week. "Oregon's economy will not rebound if we allow 144,538 minimum wage earners to fall behind inflation."

The increase mirrors a 3.77 percent increase in the Consumer Price Index since August 2010.

Ballot Measure 25, enacted by Oregon voters in 2002, requires a minimum wage adjustment annually based on changes in inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

Avakian said thousands of Oregon families are fighting to keep food on the table and a roof over their heads by working full-time at minimum wage jobs. He said the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries is committed to defending their wages.

The non-partisan Oregon Center for Public Policy also called the increase "good for workers and Oregon's economy."

The group calculated that the increase means an extra \$624 a year for a family with one full-time minimum wage worker.

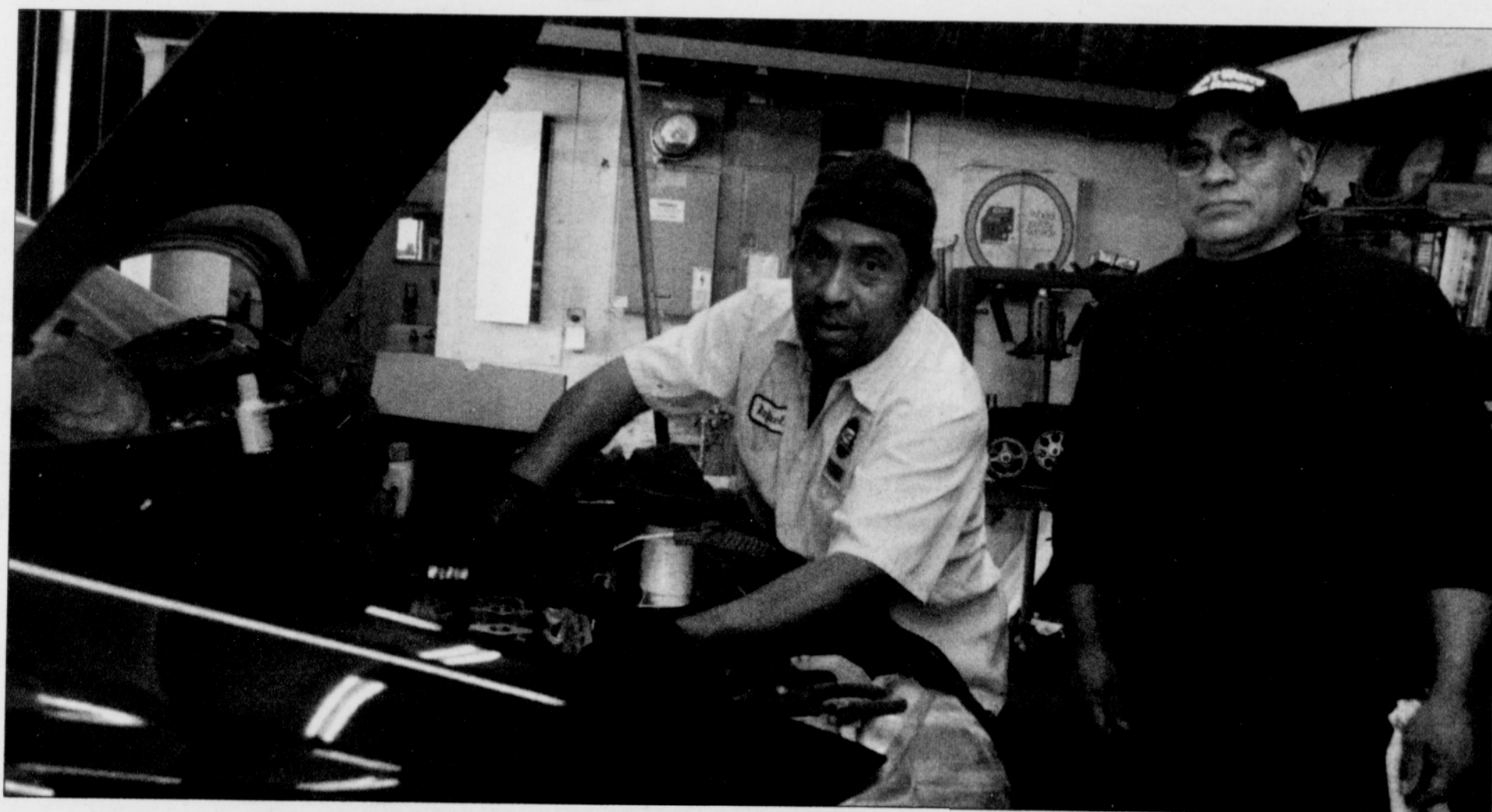


PHOTO BY MINDY COOPER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Customer Juan Piedres and employee Louise Rafael (left) at Tuan's 76 Auto Service at Northeast 33rd and Killingsworth. Although the small business has been operating for 10-years, owner Tuan Huynh Ba worries about the economy and having the ability to make even small wage increases.

"It helps the lowest-paid workers make ends meet, and it helps the economy when the workers spend those extra dollars in local businesses," said Chuck Sheketoff, OCPP executive director.

But lingering anticipation has emerged for what the affects the increase will have on small and local businesses:

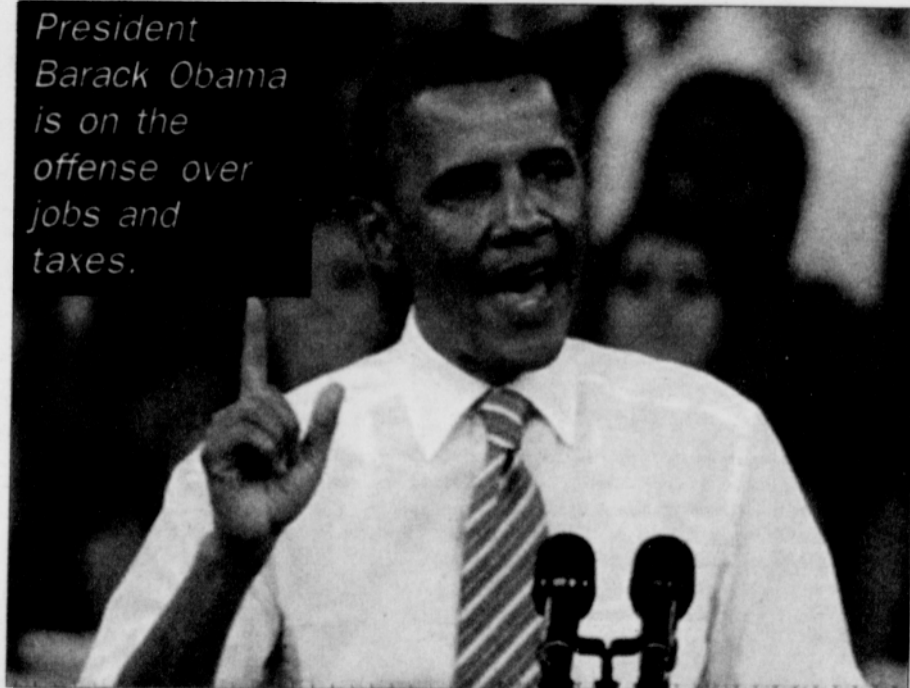
Gloria McMurtry, the owner of the 16-year-old local Talking Drum Bookstore in northeast Portland, said an immediate increase in expenditures for small

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Top Ten Minimum Wage States

\$8.67	Washington
\$8.50	Oregon
\$8.25	Nevada, Illinois, Conn.
\$8.15	Vermont
\$8.00	California, Massachusetts
\$7.75	Alaska
\$7.50	Maine

President Barack Obama is on the offense over jobs and taxes.



Obama on Fire over Jobs and Taxes Appeals for public support

(AP)—President Barack Obama is keeping up his appeal for public support of his \$447 billion proposal to boost jobs and consumer spending by urging Americans to press Congress to pass the legislation. "No more division or delay," he said.

Obama is focused on a message that has become central to a presi-

dency struggling to address stubbornly high unemployment numbers and dipping approval of his handling of the economy.

The president announced his jobs legislation to a joint session of Congress two weeks ago and has since gone outside Washington to build a case for its passage. He has been to Virginia, Ohio and North Carolina.

"The No. 1 issue for the people I meet is how we can get back to a place where we're creating good, middle-

class jobs that pay well and offer some security," he said.

Obama's proposal would reduce payroll taxes on workers, cut them in half for most businesses and offer incentives for employers to hire. It would spend tens of billions of dollars on new public works projects, extend unemployment benefits for long-term jobless and help states and localities avoid layoffs of teachers and emer-

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