

The



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The Portland Observer 43

'City of Roses'



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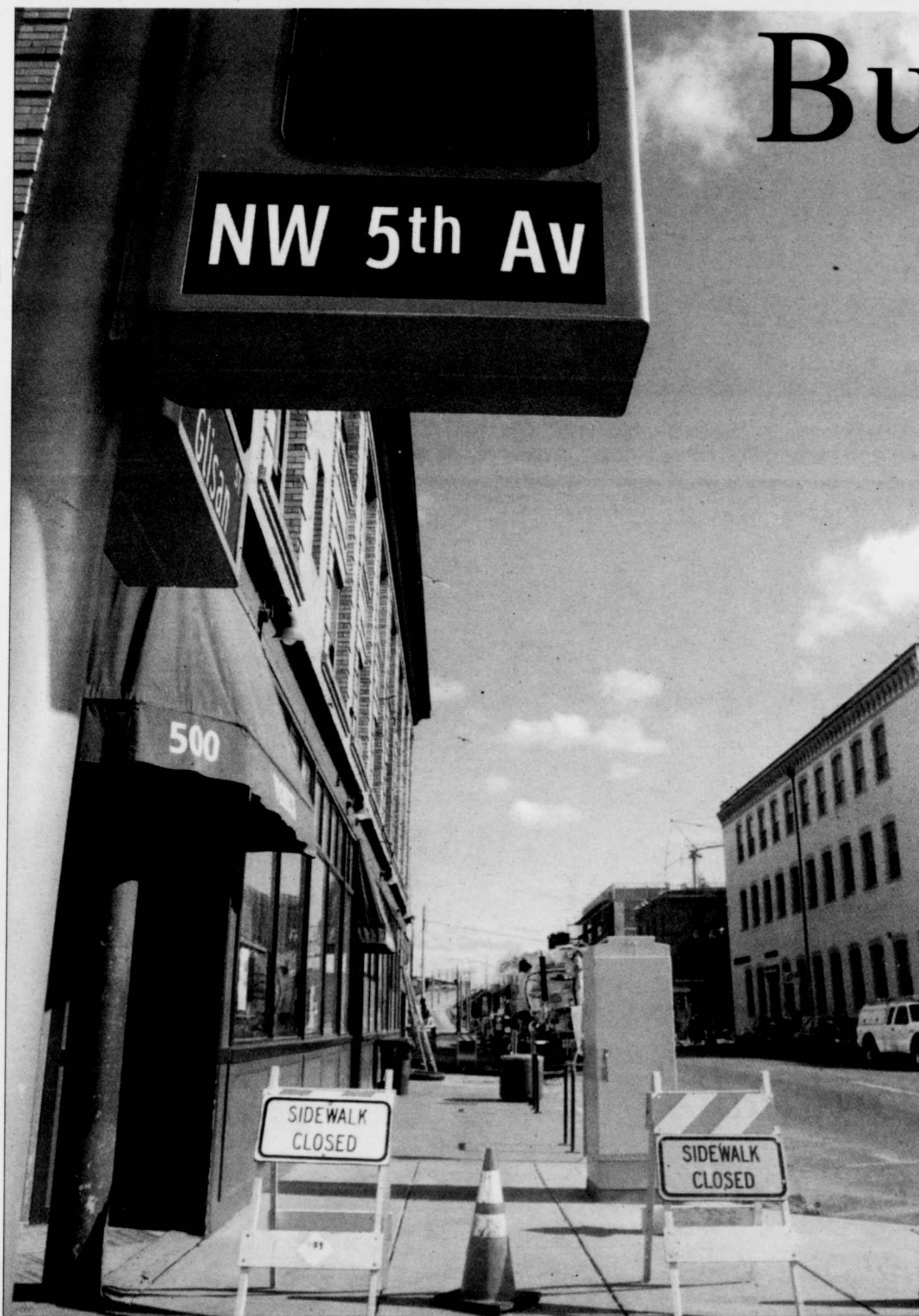
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Burdened by Rent

Housing needs outweigh inventory

BY MINDY COOPER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Although sounds of construction echo throughout the Portland area as new housing units are built, developers are having trouble meeting the increasingly high demand from residents who depend on lower rent to make ends meet.

According to a report by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, Oregon is one of a dozen states where the need for affordable housing substantially outweighs the availability of units where residents aren't pushed into spending more than half their household income on rent.

A housing unit is considered affordable if it costs no more than 30 percent of the renter's income, according to the coalition.

"If you look at what people's incomes are with what people's housing cost—the two don't match up."

— Janet Byrd, executive director
of Neighborhood Partnerships

"The high need for affordable housing is a combination of low incomes plus more people in the rental market, which has created more demand for rental housing," said Janet Byrd, executive director of Neighborhood Partnerships, which convenes with the Housing Alliance, a state wide coalition of organizations that work together at the state level to advocate for affordable housing resources.

"If you look at what people's incomes are with what people's housing cost—the two don't match up," said Byrd.

People also continue to lose their homes to foreclosures, so previous homeowners are now in the rental markets, driving up prices across the board, she added. "The rental vacancy rate is also quite low."

This post-recession return to renting, mixed with high

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PHOTO BY MINDY COOPER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Portland Housing Bureau is providing tax-increment financing to the non-profit Central City Concern to renovate the Medford Hotel Apartments at Northwest Fifth Avenue and Glisan Street. The building will provide 60 affordable housing units.