

# Neighborhood Activist Loses Job

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with land use, transportation and public safety. She also tackled new community initiatives like economic development, gentrification and the proposed shipment of coal through Portland.

Under Coleman's leadership, the coalition helped create the King Farmers Market and its Food Share program for subsidizing purchases with SNAP food stamps. The group joined efforts to provide low-cost installation of solar panels through its Solarize Northeast program.

They took aggressive positions against the proposed I-5 Columbia River Crossing bridge, and challenged the city's handling of crowd control at Last Thursday celebrations on Northeast Alberta Street.

Such efforts "put us on the map," Coleman says. "We strengthened our relationship with neighborhood associations, but what really made the light bulb go off was our advocacy. We provided a place for discussion. In my opinion, it was true community building."

As recently as last spring, she says, the board had told her "I'm the



Former Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods Executive Director Paige Coleman (right), and NECN staffer Katie Chastain, working on community building during the Alberta Street Fair last month.

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best director they ever had."

NECN's first director, Edna Robertson, said she had steered clear of politics during her 19-year tenure on the theory that it could

northeast's living room, where everyone is welcome.

"Times have changed since the 1970s and there are different issues," Coleman said, but like Robertson,

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— Paige Coleman

turn off people who didn't agree with a political direction, and it could be that Coleman's approach may have generated some dissatisfaction in this way.

Coleman says she has continued Robertson's legacy by making the neighborhood office "like the

she said she advocated for public safety measures, and instituted programs such as the Youth Gang Outreach and TriMet Rider Advocates.

"Going beyond serving neighborhood associations is necessary if NECN wants to address "the real needs of the community," she said.



Dr. Billy R. Flowers (above center) and his skilled staff are ready to help those in need.

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