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The PO

**Healing the
Healthcare Blues**
*Stage set for
annual Inner City
Blues Festival*
See Local News, page 3



**Lorraine
Hansberry's Wisdom**
*Oregon Shakespeare
Festival revives African
American play*
See Metro, page 11



The Portland Observer 44

'City of Roses'



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PHOTO BY CLAIRE STOCK

Two passers-by take in the 'Jumptown Video Wall' at The Magnolia, a new housing complex on 3250 N.E. Martin Luther King Blvd. iPod Touch screens embedded between the bricks of the building scroll between images and video of the neighborhood's vibrant jazz scene of years past to present day reflections of the ever-changing neighborhood.

Jazz from the Past

Historic neighborhood flickers between the bricks

BY DONOVAN M. SMITH
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Blended into the façade of Innovative Housing's newest housing complex are literal lenses to Portland's African American past. Between the bricks at The Magnolia, 3250 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., are four iPod Touch units that run continuous loops of historical photos mixed with recent footage.

Deemed the "Jumptown Video Wall" the name comes in tribute to trumpeter and swing-band leader

Harry James' song "Jump Town."

The initiator and installer of this wall, Pamela Chipman says she looked to pay tribute to the Eliot neighborhood's "golden years" which she refers to as 1941-1957 when jazz and a vibrant black community was nearly inescapable.

"I wanted to pay tribute to what was lost from this neighborhood. All the music, the jazz," she says.

Innovative Housing contacted Chipman before construction of the affordable housing complex when the non-profit organization was planning an

art installation as part of The Magnolia's design. A northeast resident since her arrival in town some 20 years ago, the freelance artist jumped at the opportunity to tell some of the neighborhood's history.

The never-ending slideshow displays black-and-white photographs from the 1940's and 50's, mixed with 15-minute videos she captured from the neighborhood's present-day environment of people biking, driving, playing tennis, playing saxophone —

continued ▼ on page 4