

The INSIDE

The Week in Review page 2



METRO

page 10



Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

pages 11-14



RELIGION



page 15

CLASSIFIEDS

page 16

CALENDAR

page 17

pages 18-19

OPINION



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LOCAL NEWS



PHOTO BY NORM EDER

Portland jazz and soul legend Sweet Baby James Benton has died after a long illness. He was 85.

Beloved Musician Remembered

The Portland community is paying tribute to Sweet Baby James Benton, a local music legend who died Feb. 14 after a long illness. He was 85. A private burial was held and an announcement about honoring Benton with a public Celebration of Life event was pending, according to family and friends.

Benton was a link to Portland's past as a post World War II jazz city. He came to prominence as a "soul shouter" singer while performing in the for-

mer African-American clubs that lined North Broadway and Williams Avenue. He formed a group called the Del-Tones in the 1960s, and later in his career, he was a member of 'The Original Cats.' He most recently performed in the band "King Louie and Baby James," with Louis Pain.

"He was one of the most loved personalities of our music community," said Norman Sylvester, another Portland Blues and R&B favorite and a band mate

who shared the stage with Benton many times over the years. "With our loss of James, we also lost a wealth of stories of our African American history and the local music scene."

Sylvester and Richard Arnold planned to join Sarah Billings on the Portland Radio Project Wednesday to play some of James' music and talk a little about the man. The show airs from 11 a.m. to noon on 99.1 FM and can be streamed on your computer at <http://prp.fm/>.

Tests Offered for Airborne Metals

A major healthcare provider that enrolls thousands of people in the Oregon Health Plan and Medicare has issued a call concerning the risks from exposure to elevated levels of airborne metals found near two glass company sites in southeast and north Portland.

FamilyCare Health said it wants its members to know that testing for these heavy metals is covered by the insurer's plan and, if they are concerned, they should talk with their primary care provider about getting tested.

According to the Department of Environmental Quality, people who spent the most time within about one-half mile of either the

Bullseye or Uroboros glass factories have the greatest potential for exposure to airborne heavy metals. Because the risk of emissions from glass factories can add to other exposures, the following is recommended:

Individuals and families are urged not to smoke or be exposed to second hand smoke because burning cigarettes release both arsenic and cadmium; a healthy diet including selenium (nuts, whole grains), iron (enriched cereals, meat, beans), calcium (milk products, leafy greens) and folate (beans, spinach, avocado) may lessen harmfulness from metals;

People are strongly encouraged

to wash their hands after working or playing outdoors because soil can be contaminated with a variety of metals; and families living within one-half mile of factories should await further guidance before eating backyard produce.

"While the degree of exposure to people living near these factories is still unknown, FamilyCare supports the decision members make with their primary care provider regarding testing," stated Dr. Anna Jimenez, FamilyCare Medical Director. "We also encourage everyone to take pro-active steps to stay healthy by following the recommendations and getting regular check-ups."