



Mississippi
 Alberta
 North Portland

METRO

Vancouver
 East County
 Beaverton



George Mayes poses in front of his bike and birdhouse cart, a device that allows him to haul his unique creations to street corners around town, much to the admiration of passersby.

Portland man builds unique, sustainable birdhouses

BY DANNY PETERSON
 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

You won't see a more popular street vendor with humans and animals alike than the birdhouse toting George Mayes, who makes a striking impression on street corners with his bicycle and hand-crafted wooden trailer.

Packed full of what looks like rustic, miniature cabins -- some even complete with chimneys, staircases, awnings and roof shingles -- the cart is loaded with the future nesting homes for our feathered, fly-

Inspired Creations

ing neighbors.

Hardly a moment can pass before a customer dogs him about his creations or just gets enraptured with conversation. With his towering frame, white beard, and a bellowing laugh like Santa Claus, the 62-year-old has a knack for putting smiles on stranger's faces.

A former carpenter, Mayes said he's always thrived on working with his hands.

"I enjoy, you know, craftsmanship and building. It seems like it just opens my mind up," Mayes said.

His birdhouses are also environmentally friendly. He uses recycled, organic materials, like cedar and found branches, to cre-

ate green birdhouses that can even thwart predation of smaller birds. The traditional birdhouse perch, which is usually done in the form of a dowel jutting out from the feeder, sometimes attracted larger, predatory birds, Mayes found. So he redesigned the birdhouses so that they used a diamond shape ledge half an inch wide so smaller birds could feed in peace.

He's even designed original bat-houses, upon a customer's request.

Mayes' is known for selling his artistic creations, which range from \$30-\$50, in front of the Multnomah County Courthouse, downtown; along Hawthorne at Powell's Books; at Good Samaritan Hospital in northwest Portland and in front of the New Seasons Market on the corner of North Interstate and Rosa Parks Way.

Always seeing the glass half full, Mayes has battled gout as a medical condition and homelessness, but never gave up being

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15