



An adult in custody plays music in a mental health ward at the Oregon State Penitentiary in Salem where the drab walls of the space were recently transformed into a more humanized environment by painting a tranquil outdoor scene to create a more humanized environment.

## Prison Walls Get Touch of Humanity

The Oregon Department of Corrections, in partnership with Disability Rights Oregon has created a better environment for inmates with mental health issues in the Behavior Health Unit of Oregon State Penitentiary in Salem.

The department reached an agreement with the disability advocates in 2016 to make substantive changes to the operations and physical structure of the unit which currently houses 40 adults in custody with sometimes severe mental health issues.

Since then, the prison has increased available treatment and outdoor recreational space, increased security and treatment staffing, and collaborated with experts on mental health treatment.

These efforts were made to create a more humanized environment because 95 percent of the inmate will release from custody and return to Oregon's communities, officials said.

"Disability Rights Oregon and DOC agreed to solve this challenge together in the conference room and not the courtroom, and that is exactly what we have accomplished," said Colette S. Peters, corrections department director. "Through our partnership and the incredible work of the employees at the Oregon State Penitentiary, we significantly improved the lives of the adults in custody and the wellness of the team who works in BHU."

## The Week in Review

### Blazers' Nurkic Brakes Leg

Trail Blazers starting center Jusuf Nurkic suffered compound fractures to his left leg in the second overtime of Portland's win over Brooklyn on Monday. The good news after surgery on Tuesday was that he's expected to make a full recovery, but will likely be out for the season.



### Smollett Charges Dropped



In a stunning development, prosecutors in Chicago dropped all charges against "Empire" actor Jussie Smollett on Tuesday, a month after he was hit with felony counts stemming from what police said was a staged street attack. After appearing in court, Smollett thanked his attorneys, friends, the citizens of Chicago and "the state of Illinois for attempting to do what is right."

### Mueller Delivers Trump Report

Special counsel Robert Mueller did not find evidence that President Donald Trump's campaign "conspired or coordinated" with Russia to influence the 2016 presidential election but reached no conclusion on whether Trump obstructed justice, Attorney General William Barr declared Sunday. That brought a hearty claim of vindication from Trump but set the stage for new rounds of political and legal fighting.

### Oregon Teams to Sweet 16

The women's team from Oregon State and the men's team from the University of Oregon have each advanced to the Sweet 16 brackets of their respective rounds for an NCAA basketball championship. OSU withstood No. 5 Gonzaga for a 76-70 victory on Monday and will play Louisville. The Ducks beat UC Irvine 73-54 on Sunday and will face top-seeded Virginia.



### Racial Bias in Traffic Stops

A study of nearly 100 million traffic stops from around the country has concluded that, on average, black drivers are 20 percent more likely to get pulled over than white drivers. The Stanford University study reflects experiences that have long been shared by people of color, an observable racial bias in both traffic stops and subsequent decisions to conduct vehicle searches.

### Turbines Top New Crossing

TriMet began installing 12 small wind turbines Monday on top of existing poles on TriMet's new light rail bridge, Tilikum Crossing. They will generate electricity to be stored in batteries that power lights, which will shine on the turbines at night.

### E-Scooters to Return

Portland announced a new one year pilot program for electronic scooters Monday. It will start as early as April 26 and follows last year's 120-day pilot program that showed e-scooters have the potential to help reduce congestion and pollution, but also raise concerns about people riding e-scooters on sidewalks, violating traffic laws and creating issues with people walking and people with disabilities.

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