

The Week in Review

COVID-19 Cases Increase

Oregon's coronavirus cases increased by 514 people during the weekend and a quarter of the new cases are based in Multnomah County, where officials say a majority of the spread is occurring among close social networks, such as family and friends.

Governor Calls on Lawmakers

Gov. Kate Brown announced last week she will convene a special legislative session starting on Wednesday to address the state's COVID-19 pandemic and to improve police accountability following weeks of protests over the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Black Woman Handcuffed at Emanuel Hospital

Complaints about a black woman handcuffed and detained Thursday by Legacy Emanuel security has prompted the hospital to suspend its security officers' further use of handcuffs and trespass arrests in non-violent situations. The woman ultimately was released and not charged, the Oregonian reported.

Washington Statue Topped

A quiet evening of demonstrations for racial justice and police reform in Portland on Thursday last week ended with another group of protesters razing of a George Washington statue at northeast 57th and Sandy. Some wrapped the statue's head in an American flag and lit the flag on fire.



Gresham Votes to Fly Black Lives Matter Flag

The Gresham City Council voted unanimously on Monday to fly the Black Lives Matter flag at City Hall until the end of July. It comes days after the resignations of Gresham's mayor, police chief and city manager and reports blaming those in leadership positions for dropping the ball on diversity training in the police department.

Police Tactics Review Ordered

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler and new Police Chief Chuck Lovell said they will review police tactics after hearing accounts of officers threatening and roughing up journalists covering demonstrations against police brutality. "Members of the media, not just in Portland but around the country, should not be targeted, hurt, or arrested while reporting on demonstrations," the two leaders said in a joint statement last week.



Atlanta Officer Charged

An Atlanta police officer was charged last week with murder for the shooting death of Rayshard Brooks in a fast-food parking lot two weeks ago, the latest in a long line of unarmed African Americans whose fatal encounters with law enforcement have been documented on video. Brooks, a 27-year-old father-of-three, "never presented himself as a threat" according to prosecutors.



PHOTO BY DJ WILLINGHAM

Brennan Scarlett, a former Central Catholic football standout and now a linebacker with the Houston Texans of the NFL, speaks out for racial justice on Friday, June 19 during a Black Lives Matter rally at Peninsula Park in observance of Juneteenth. In the wake of national and local protests over police brutality and racial injustice, Portland government leaders have declared Juneteenth a new annual paid holiday for city and county employees.

Juneteenth Elevates in Significance

As day becomes holiday, NFL star leads youth on justice march

Portland observed Juneteenth for the first time as an official holiday Friday and the day was celebrated by thousands of people who marched for racial justice in demonstrations against police brutality, protests that have continued almost daily in the city since the Memorial Day police custody death of George Floyd, a black man whose neck was pinned to the ground in Minneapolis for more than 8 minutes before he died.

At Peninsula Park in north Portland, a large group of young people gathered to celebrate black lives with speakers in a Juneteenth event organized by Malik Montgomery, a 22-year-old who grew up in the neighborhood and hosted with the help of the Big Yard Foundation, a nonprofit that supports community empowerment.

The speakers took to the stage to share their experiences and speak out for racial justice. Brennan Scarlett, a former Central Catholic football standout and now a linebacker with the Houston Texans of the NFL, called on the community to unify behind a peaceful message for change.

The group then marched down Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard

to King School Park as they chanted "Black Lives Matter."

In another Juneteenth protest organized by young people, participants reflected on what the holiday and the Black Lives Matter movement means to them during a gathering at the Salmon Springs Fountain, downtown. Later, members of Portland's interfaith community wrapped up the day with a prayer at Terry Schunk Plaza, downtown.

Both Portland and Multnomah County have made Juneteenth an official annual paid holiday for their employees in a moment of reckoning for the history of anti-blackness and racism in Portland.

Last Wednesday, the Portland City Council voted unanimously to adopt Juneteenth as an annual Day of Remembrance and paid holiday.

"Since the death of George Floyd, thousands of people have reached out to my office demanding accountability and change," Wheeler said. "Today's ordinance and resolution are a direct result of our commitment to listen and respond to our community. This is not performative. This is our reality and it is our responsibility to resolve the brutality of the past."

Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury cited the historical systemic oppression of black people as the backdrop to her recent order to make Juneteenth an annual holiday for all county em-

ployees.

Although Juneteenth has been regularly celebrated by Multnomah County employees and community members as a day of commemoration, education and achievement, the chair's designation alongside Independence Day, Memorial Day and Presidents' Day in significance and impact.

"We have a profound responsibility at the county to acknowledge that the structural inequities in our community and country are rooted in the original enslavement of black people," Kafoury said in a statement. "Observing the day of black liberation honors the historic and current struggle, acknowledges the strength of our black neighbors, friends and family, and reminds us of the hard and necessary work we must continue to dismantle systems of oppression."

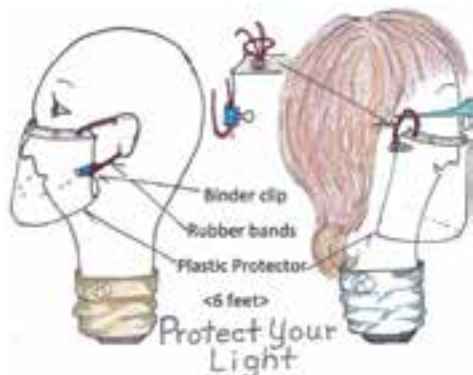
Oregon Gov. Kate Brown on Thursday proclaimed June 19 as Juneteenth in Oregon and said she will introduce a bill in 2021 to make it a state holiday.

Brown said celebrating black freedom "is fiercely important as people around the world protest systemic racism and undeniably show that Black Lives Matter."

Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, when the Union army brought word of the Emancipation Proclamation to enslaved people in Texas. It is celebrated as the end of slavery in the United States.

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