

Apology Issued 73 Years after Vanport

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In a video released on the Sunday anniversary of the May 30, 1948 Memorial Day Flood, Michael Buonocore, executive director of the low income housing provider, said he wanted to acknowledge the racism, the negligence and wrongdoing that Home Forward, formerly the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP), played in the disaster and aftermath.

Vanport was built in 1942 to provide housing for people working in the shipyards and at its peak housed about 40,000 people making it the second largest city in Oregon at the time. But the structures weren't built to last, Buonocore said. Its homes were not on permanent foundations and under strain from heavy rainfall and melting snowpack, a nearby dike burst and flooded Vanport.

While the history of the city has been the subject of many articles, documentaries, interviews, art installations and tours, Buonocore said there had never been an acknowledgement from the Housing Authority of Portland, now Home Forward, about its own role in the tragedy.

He said in the spring of 1948, as the likelihood of flooding increased, HAP downplayed the threat of disaster.



Michael Buonocore

"We put notes on people's doors that said 'Remember, dikes are safe at present, you will be warned if necessary. You will have time to leave. Don't get excited,'" Buonocore said. HAP itself, however, got a "little excited" about the flood threat at the time, the official pointed out in the video.

"We removed our files from the property and the horses, but we didn't evacuate the people," Buonocore said.

He said it was important to tell the truth, that HAP didn't want anything to do with Vanport when it was created, and the agency also did not help the Black residents of Van-

port after the flood relocate to other housing throughout the Portland area.

"Albina was still the only area where Black people could live, but there wasn't enough housing to accommodate them and what we really wanted was for Black people to leave," Buonocore said, describing sediments at the time.

"Instead we reinforced their isolation and segregation," he said.

Edgar Kaiser built Vanport in 110 days, circumventing the local officials that were resistant to its existence and HAP took over its operations out of necessity, Buonocore said.

"By 1948 we had allowed Vanport to fall into disrepair. It was considered an eyesore and a slum. Black people were not the only people living there, but they were a high percentage of the population because there was really nowhere else for them to go," he said.

"From its earliest days, the Housing Authority of Portland did what the institutions of this country were founded to do, reinforce the progress of white people at the expense of Black, Brown, Indigenous and people of color," Buonocore said.

"We were wrong. And I apologize to the community and the people who were hurt," he said.



Elizabeth Mosley

Celebrating 102 Years!

Elizabeth Mosley of Portland celebrated her 102th birthday on May 25 with the love of her family and friends.

Mosley was born on May 25, 1919.

"Happy Birthday, with love from your family!"

Greene, Hollands Elected to School Board

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a four-way race for Zone 4 representing north Portland, capturing 73 percent of the

vote; Gary Hollands, a small business owner and executive director of the nonprofit Albina Sports Program, captured 83 percent of the vote for Zone 5, representing north-

east Portland.

Jaime Cale, a Black secretary at Rose Parks Elementary, fell short in her write-in campaign against Greene. While also gaining several endorsements from activists in the Black community, write-in-votes reach

just 4 percent of the total.

Julia Brim-Edwards, the only incumbent, and a non-minority board member who led the search that resulted in the hiring of Guadalupe Guerrero as school superintendent, was re-elected with 80 percent of the vote.



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– Iton Udosenata, Assistant Superintendent, Salem-Keizer Public Schools



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