



THE SKANNER

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW

Please join *The Skanner News* for its 25th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Monday Jan. 17 The Oregon Convention Center

Union Hiring Goals

Carpenters Union crafts diversity goals, but will others agree?

By Helen Silvis
Of *The Skanner News*

Plans are underway for a raft of major public construction projects that will bring millions of federal dollars into Oregon's struggling economy. Projects set to go forward include:

- the \$330 million Sellwood Bridge;
- the \$140 million Oregon Health and Sciences University Sustainability Center;
- the \$39 million expansion of Portland Community College's Southeast center;
- a new \$60 million FBI building at Cascade Center;
- and the Columbia River Crossing, projected to cost at least \$3.87 billion.

"These projects offer a great opportunity to create jobs in our community and also to train people to get well-paid jobs in the future," says Maurice Rahming, President of O'Neill Electric and of the Oregon branch of the National Association of Minority Contractors. "What many people don't realize is that skilled construction industry jobs are very well paid, and offer a pathway to financial security."

Now a new initiative from the Carpenters Union and the Operating Engineers, Local 701, could open up opportunities to minorities, women and disadvantaged small businesses.

"This can have such a tremendous impact on Portland and the Greater Portland area, increasing diversity among business people and the construction workforce," says Doug Tweedie, executive secretary, treasurer and CEO of the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters. "The opportunities are huge, absolutely huge."

What the carpenters have done is to draft a model Community Benefits Agreement that could become standard for Oregon's public works contracts – if other construction unions sign on. It piggybacks on previous work done by the National Association of Minority Contractors, which for decades

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SWORN IN



PHOTO BY BRIAN STIMSON

Judge Adrienne Nelson swears in Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith in a ceremony and celebration that was held Jan. 7 at Portland Community College Cascade Campus.

Political Violence Has Long History in Portland

Legal precedents reflect national debate over heated rhetoric

Lisa Loving
Of *The Skanner News*

It is a strange coincidence that two of the biggest civil cases in America against virulent conservative rhetoric – incidents that involved politically-motivated murders – were tried in Portland courtrooms.

In 2002, anti-choice activists who had created a "wanted" poster-style website listing abortion providers with gun sights over their faces were found liable for damages

because the site constituted "a true threat," and not protected First Amendment speech.

And in 1988, White supremacist leader Tom Metzger and his son, John, were found guilty of "organizing" and inciting the fatal skinhead beating of Portland resident Mulugeta Seraw.

The Metzgers, sued by Seraw's family who were represented free of charge by the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, were

handed a \$12.5 million fine, which effectively bankrupted their organization, White Aryan Resistance (WAR).

The American Coalition of Life Activists, sued by Planned Parenthood, collected and posted to the Internet information including the home addresses of dozens of abortion providers – three of whose names were crossed off the website's list after they were fatally shot.

The ACLU was fined \$108.5 million in damages in 1999, which was eventually whittled

down to about \$17 million, and the website was finally shut down.

'Who's Responsible?'

The parallels between these incidents and the Tucson shootings are striking in light of the bitter current debate on "who's responsible" for last weekend's devastating rampage.

Since the news broke Saturday morning, the Internet and cable news programs have boiled over with arguments over

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Reel Music Film Festival Continues

From African Beethoven to Gospel, films speak to Black experience

By Brian Stimson
Of *The Skanner News*

Throughout the year, Bill Foster keeps an eye out for the best films about music. Now in its 28th year, the NorthWest Film Center's Reel Music Festival is a showcase for 25 to 30 of some of the world's most interesting, most under-appreciated films about musicians, perform-

ances and the world around them.

This year, the festival is featuring several films that speak to the Black experience, both African and American, including "Ray Charles America," "Kinshasa Symphony," "In My Mind" and "Rejoice and Shout."

Foster's journey to find these films never ends. Throughout the year Foster keeps a running tally of the best, mostly under-watched, musical films. He keeps an eye out

for local filmmakers, films that may never get widely released.

"We're trying to find alternative things that you wouldn't normally find," he told *The Skanner News*.

Take the film, "Rejoice and Shout," says Foster, a film chronicling and celebrating 200 year musical history of African

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