



THE SKANNER

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW



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Taser Policies Examined

California court rulings push change in 'less lethal' force

By Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

Portland law enforcement officials are taking another look at their policies regarding how Tasers are used, and community members are being encouraged to seek out their neighborhood Special Safety Public Action Committee meetings to share concerns about the weapons.

The move comes as recent local Taser-related incidents, together with a December court ruling out of California, could lead to more big lawsuits against the City of Portland.

In addition to attending the regularly-scheduled neighborhood safety committee gatherings – which are held all over the city – the public is welcome at the Citizens Review Committee Taser/Less Lethal Force Workgroup, held monthly at City Hall. The next one is Tuesday, Feb. 15 at 5 p.m. in the Auditor's Conference Room on the first floor.

Independent Police Review Assistant Director Constantin Severe said the citizen panel has since last year been inviting experts to answer their questions on Taser and less-lethal force from as many jurisdictions as they can find.

That has so far included the City Auditor staff who prepared a 2010 report that concluded Tasers are currently used by Portland Police officers if a suspect shows the intent to resist arrest or police directives – but that a better policy would be to use them against people who are actually resisting commands, showing aggression or who are in danger of harming themselves or others.

In December, 21-year-old Daniel Collins – visiting his family in Portland while on winter break from his college studies in Arizona – was Tasered into unconsciousness by Portland Police while trying to exit a downtown nightclub where a fight had broken out in the bar.

Collins was revived by paramedics who

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VISITING SCHOLAR

Mengesha Retie Endalew from the University of Degli Studi di Padova in Italy was one of the distinguished speakers who attended the Association for African American Historical Research and Preservation 2011 Black History Conference Feb. 5 at the Northwest African American Museum.



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Black Starbucks Workers Allege Mistreatment

BOLI investigation targets alleged bias at Portland's Tazo Tea Plant

By Brian Stimson
Of The Skanner News

Several Black workers who say they were improperly treated and fired from the Tazo Tea factory in Southeast Portland have file complaints with the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries. The state agency has launched an investigation into the allegations.

In total, The Skanner News has confirmed that four Black workers have been fired within the last two years from the

Starbucks-owned company. The Skanner News was able to only speak to three of them. A fifth employee – now deceased – was also dismissed, but The Skanner News was unable to confirm details of his employment.

While the complaints and situations around their firings from Tazo are different, each man tells a similar tale of disparate treatment and dismissal by management when compared to the actions of their White co-workers. All of the Black workers were employed in the manufac-

turing/shipping section of the Tazo Tea factory in Portland.

The complaint alleges that Black employees were placed under closer scrutiny than any other employees at the plant. The former employees who spoke to The Skanner say the atmosphere made the working conditions hard to bear.

Shakur Shabazz – a four year employee – was fired in September 2010 for arriving late, soon after an injury caused doctors to put him on a light work schedule and managers

had given him a flexible schedule, he says.

Steve Murray – a 12-year employee – was fired in July 2010 after management told him he wasn't doing a good enough job on a position he wasn't fully trained to accomplish.

Lawrence Willis – a four-year employee – says he was fired for "no call, no show" in May 2009 when he was sick. He says he did call in to report his absence that day.

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Mayor Adams Boosts Youth Opportunity

Broken schools and failing local economies are linked in Portland

Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

Beefed up transportation, more affordable housing, quality food, job opportunities, stronger youth programs, better neighborhoods and law enforcement policies.

What can the City of Portland do – outside the classroom – to improve education

in the city's schools?

Local students, Mayor Sam Adams, and a few hundred others who convened Monday at Self Enhancement Inc. for the Portland Education Summit are generating a long list of things the city could do – and starting March 2 you can start adding your own feedback about your schools and your neighborhoods in general.

"We're seeing underachievement that's

more prolific in some parts of the city than in others," said Mayor Adams' education strategies director, Kali Thorne Ladd, last week.

"We don't have control over the schools but we do have control over other things that shape young peoples' lives."

Ladd and others link the failing education

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