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Locals Lobby in Salem

A handful of key
racial measures
move towards law

By Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

Oregon's Communities of Color coalition has been lobbying the Salem Legislature in support of a slate of bills designed to promote racial equity and address disparities across the state.

This week on Tuesday June 15, activists met in Salem to support SB560, the End Racial Profiling bill. The bill would ban racial profiling tied to personal descriptions or circumstances, except in cases where law enforcement has received information tied to a specific case. Sponsored by Sens. Chip Shields and Jackie Dingfelder and Rep. Michael Dembrow, the bill would require all law enforcement agencies to take steps to eliminate profiling and to investigate complaints about profiling. The Attorney General would have to create an independent complaints procedure.

"Profiling happens every day in our communities," said Andrew Riley public policy director for the Center for Intercultural Organizing. "When people are considered suspects because of who they are, it erodes our communities' ability to trust law enforcement, makes our families less safe, and violates basic principles of fairness."

Currently the bill is under discussion in the Judiciary Committee. For more information, contact Andrew Riley at andrew@interculturalorganizing.org by calling 503-936-9430.

Riley says this week's public hearing is vital to building support for a ban on racial profiling in Oregon. Major policy changes often take more than one year to pass.

"We view this as the first step of a long-term strategy to pass this bill," Riley said.

So far this session, however, communities of color have chalked up several victories. Among important bills that the Legislature has passed are:

Senate Bill 463B A racial impact bill that requires the Criminal Justice Commission to issue racial impact statements for any laws

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WORLD FLOAT



PHOTO BY LISA LOVING

Following on the heels of last year's second-annual Big Float across the Willamette River, above, organizers are bringing two events this summer encouraging folks to jump in – with life vests and inner-tubes. A world-record attempt will be made on the Willamette River on Friday, July 5, to join hands and set a Guinness Book World Record for "Most People in a Floating Line." Then, on July 28, the Big Float 3 invites everyday people with an inner-tube and life vest to simply enjoy the float from under the Marquam Bridge west bank to the Tom McCall Bowl – on the west bank of the river just south of the Hawthorne Bridge. Cost for the World Float is \$20, which includes a life vest and inner-tube; bring them along to the Big Float 3 a couple weeks later. For more information go to www.humanaccessproject.com.

FBI Launches Tipline for Fraud Reporting

New effort against 'public corruption' includes telephone, email

By Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

Local FBI officials Tuesday unveiled two new ways for members of the public to pass on suspicions of government fraud.

"FBI agents in Oregon are targeting corrupt public officials—and they need your help to do it," the agency's website says.

Call in tips to 503-460-8585 or e-mail PortlandTips@ic.fbi.gov.

The new tipline comes seven months after Ellis McCoy, the

former City of Portland parking manager, pled guilty to bribery, conspiracy to take bribes, and falsifying income tax returns.

By many accounts, McCoy's criminal activities earned many complaints to city officials over the years, but he wasn't stopped until the FBI and the IRS started investigating a corruption case involving a Florida businessman named George Levey and his company, Cale Parking Systems USA, which marketed Smart Meter machines made in Sweden.

One local Portland businessman in particular, Bruce Feathers, tried in vain for years to persuade the city to investigate McCoy; Feathers even filed a tort claim against the city after McCoy's arrest.

Feathers also repeatedly took his concerns about bribery and kickbacks to city officials but no one acted; even the civil rights organization the Albina Ministerial Alliance weighed in on the case.

The City of Portland set up its own 'Anonymous Tipline' in

2010, after the initial fallout from the McCoy scandal. To submit a tip, either: Go to www.portlandfraudalert.com and fill out a form; go to www.ethicspoint.com, follow the "File New Report" link and enter "City of Portland" and fill out a form; or call EthicsPoint at 1-866-342-4148, where a toll-free line is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"Reports will be taken by a live intake specialist," the city's website says. "Calls are not

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Londer Learning Center Milestone

Inmates raised funds for first-ever caps and gowns at graduation

By Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

Joy, tears and excitement were on display at Multnomah County last Thursday, when the Londer Learning Center held a graduation ceremony for its GED class of 2013.

This year the center celebrates its 20th year of helping corrections clients pass the GED exam and go on to build careers and

attend college. And, for the first time ever, the graduates wore caps and gowns, thanks to a fundraising effort by Ezekiel Stroschein, a former inmate who worked as a GED tutor for other inmates while serving time in an Oregon prison.

In 2011, Stroschein saw an article on the Londer Learning Center graduation.

"It caught my eye, but it really caught my eye because they didn't have caps and

gowns," Stroschein says. "And our department didn't have the funds available for caps and gowns either. It brings such meaning to the graduation to have them, so I wondered if there was a way we could get caps and gowns."

Stroschein was studying for his associate's degree from Chemeketa College

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