

THE SKANNER

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW



For The Skanner
news alerts
Text "NEWS" to
503-715-0890 or
scan this QR code



JUNETEENTH



PHOTO BY JULIE KEEFE

Anita Koyier Mwamba and her daughter Ndalo, 11, attended the Juneteenth, "Unity in the Community" Celebration at the Life Enrichment Bookstore on Saturday June 22. The event featured musical performances by renowned songstresses Josephine Howell and Lady "A;" a presentation by former Black Panther and author Aaron Dixon; storytelling, a step dancing demonstration, face painting, and free hotdogs and popcorn. The celebration was sponsored by the African American Affinity Group. More photos on page 6

Power Rate Hike

Attorney General pushes back on PacifiCorp increase

The Attorney General this week challenged PacifiCorp's nearly 15 percent proposed rate hike, which comes after several years of annual increases.

On its website, Pacific Power and Light Company offers a grid of 'rate increase projections' indicating a 14.1 percent planned raise for 2013; no increase for 2014; a 5.5 percent raise in 2015; 8 percent in 2016 and 6.5 percent in 2017.

The Utilities and Transportation Commission, which must sign off on the rate increase, holds hearings in late August that will give PacifiCorp the chance to weigh in; the commission's decision is expected no later than December 2013.

Washington State Attorney General Rob Ferguson's legal team says PacifiCorp's 2013 raise would drain an additional \$42.8 million in revenue from Washington electric customers.

"Public Counsel believes the rate request is too high," the office said in a statement.

Ferguson told reporters this week that even though his turf is Washington State, and PacifiCorp is based in Portland, Ore., it's his job to push back on the energy price hike to protect his state residents' consumer interests.

His staff reported that in March 2011, the Washington State utilities commission authorized a \$38 million; in June 2012, PacifiCorp was authorized to raise its rates by another \$4.5 million. PacifiCorp serves approximately 132,000 electric customers in Yakima, Walla Walla, Garfield, and Columbia Counties.

Ferguson's challenge echoes those of other Western states' consumer officials over similar price hikes in states where MidAmerican Energy Holdings, the multinational corporation owned by Warren Buffett, has bought out local power utilities and systematically brought consumer prices up throughout the region.

"PacifiCorp operates in six states, so the Attorney General's Office wants to ensure

Military Looks at Sexual Assault

Joint Base Lewis McChord commits to crackdown on rape, abuse

By Adam Ashton
The News Tribune

JOINT BASE LEWIS MCCORD, Wash. (AP) — A fast-developing sexual assault prevention program at Joint Base Lewis-McChord has the Army mustering up new victim advocates, spreading a "zero tolerance" message down the ranks, and cracking down on misbehavior in the barracks.

It's intended to reverse a rising number of reported military sexual assaults across the

Armed Forces that is fraying relationships among service members and causing lawmakers to consider changes to the Army's justice system.

"When you have sexual assault in the military, it breaks down the fabric of trust in our organization," said Maj. Gen. Stephen Lanza, who this week canceled training activities for the 20,000 Lewis-McChord soldiers under his command and focused them on sexual assault programs for a single day.

Lanza began the reforms last

October when he arrived at the base to launch the 7th Infantry Division headquarters. He held discussions with female soldiers of various ranks who encouraged him to confront a culture that seems too tolerant of sexual harassment.

"We can't have this in our military," he said this week.

Similar trainings are taking place at the Army's other installations.

Last month, the Pentagon published a report showing a rise in known sexual assault

cases from 3,192 cases in 2011 to 3,374 cases in 2012. The same report suggested that as many 26,000 military service members faced unwanted sexual contact but might not have reported it.

Meanwhile, the military saw a string of embarrassing cases over the past year, such as the prosecution of a one-star Army general on sexual misconduct charges stemming from his affair with a captain and Air Force commanders granting

See **MILITARY** page 3

House Bill Would Limit Teacher Raises

The Senate approved the bill June 13 but as of Friday, the House

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — As lawmakers debate how to put up to \$1 billion more into public schools, Republicans in the Senate want to make sure that money doesn't support pay raises for teachers.

Democrats in the House oppose the bill, which has already been approved by the Senate, The Daily Herald reported in Sunday's newspaper.

The measure, Senate Bill 5946, would

push most new education dollars toward teacher training and hiring new teachers to improve the reading skills and academic performance of students. One part of the bill would prevent school districts from giving raises greater than the rate of inflation for the next two years.

Senate Education Committee Chairman Sen. Steve Litzow says the goal is to make progress.

"Everybody expects by putting a billion dollars more into education, you'll get results," said the Republican from Mercer Island. "We're going to be watching very carefully."

The Senate bill had been called one of the last stumbling blocks in reaching agreement on a new budget in time to avert a partial

See **TEACHERS** on page 3

INDEX

News2,3,6

Calendar2

Opinion4

Bids/Classifieds7