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2015 was a landmark year for legislation affecting communities of color in Oregon, according to Nkenge Harmon John, president and CEO of the Urban League of Portland.

2015 Racial Equity Report

'Facing Race' legislative breakdown says 2015 was a landmark year

By Arashi Young
 Of The Skanner News

A coalition of community-based organizations converged on the Oregon state capitol earlier this month to release a report on racial equity legislation.

The report, Facing Race, highlights an impressive year of racial equity progress from the state legislature.

The analysis identified 20 pieces of legislation that would have a significant positive impact on communities of color; 17 of those bills were signed into law.

Andrea Miller, executive director of the immigrant's rights organization, Causa Oregon, said communities of color were deeply involved this last ses-

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Tracy Morgan is Back

The comedian is 'Picking Up the Pieces'

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Wealthy Brazilians Invest in Miami

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SEATTLE HIP HOP



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Renaissance The Poet, joined a panel of poets and hip hop artists discussing the topic "Black Lives Matter in Hip Hop" Jan. 15 at Town Hall. The event which was presented in partnership with the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI), Town Hall Seattle and 50 Next: Seattle Hip-Hop Worldwide covered topics like gentrification, the effects of the Black Lives Movement on hip hop and ways to preserve the integrity of the music.

Work Begins on Historic Freemason Lodge

Last Black-owned property on Mississippi narrowly avoids closure

By Donovan M. Smith
 Of The Skanner News

Crews have begun work on a historic property on Mississippi Avenue that, just months ago, was under the financial threat of closing its doors for good.

The Sons of Haiti St. Josephs Grand Lodge, located at the corner of North Mississippi Avenue and Fremont Street, is now partially in the clear after community members rallied to help the 63-year-old

organization offset repair fees — in the amount of \$50,700 — the organization needed to meet current city codes.

"They told me to just sell the property, and cut my losses," lodge grand master John Bryant wrote in a Facebook post earlier this month. "I did not listen."

Instead, with help from the Boise Neighborhood Association, a community-led comedy fundraiser and a generous grant from the Portland Development Commission, the full

amount has been raised.

But the saga is not over. The lodge still owes an additional \$40,000 — fines the lodge racked up during the last visit from a city inspector.

In the meantime, workers have already begun the remodel, which is expected to take about three months to complete.

In that time, the site will be excavated, re-gated and re-paved. Contractor will also update the wiring and water system for the building. The remodel will

allow the lodge to host up to three more food carts on the site.

Stephen Gomez sits on the board for the Boise Neighborhood Association.

He said after continued meetings with lodge members he found they had indeed made various attempts to get into compliance with code, but ultimately lacked the resources to do so. Gomez offered his help, and re-established

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Addressing Islamophobia

Community speaks out in the face of bigoted fear against the world's fastest growing religion

By Donovan M. Smith
 Of The Skanner News

Islam is the world's fastest growing religion, with more than 1.6 billion adherents worldwide, according to a Pew study released last year.

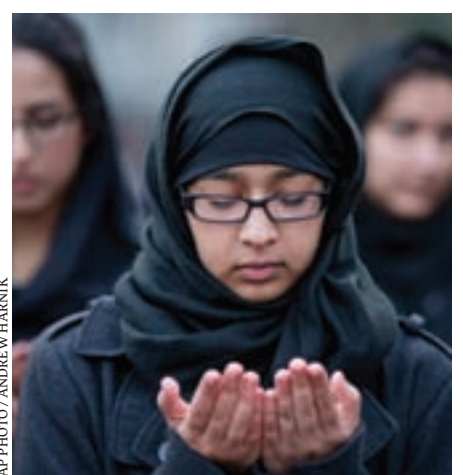
However, in the wake of extremist groups like ISIS carrying out violent acts in the name of the religion, there has been a revved up sense of fear towards Muslims locally and nation-

wide. Republican Presidential candidate Donald Trump calling for a religious registry and a Dallas, Ore. city councilor's anti-Muslim comments in November are examples.

In response, Portland leaders have been engaged in a series of public forums focused on addressing this form of bigotry.

Earlier this month, a demonstration organized by the Center for In-

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AP PHOTO / ANDREW HARNIK

Shiite Muslims pray together while they rally for peace outside of the White House Dec. 6 in Washington.