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SEATTLE TAP JAM



Tap dancers of all ages and abilities took to the stage Jan. 7 at the Royal Room in Columbia City for the Seattle Tap Jam. The event was hosted by Tap dance instructor Jesse Sawyers.

U.S. Black Unemployment Rate Lowest Ever

At 6.8 percent, rate is still nearly double its White counterpart

The Skanner News

The close of 2017 brought historically positive news for unemployment among African Americans nationwide.

The annual average unemployment rate for Blacks fell to 7.5 percent last year. And in December, Black unemployment dropped to 6.8 percent — the lowest ever recorded by the US Labor Department since it started tracking the rate back in 1972.

The Black unemployment rate is still almost double its White counterpart, however, which sits at 3.7 percent.

Last year's numbers reflect the sunnier times of 2000, when the annual average for Black unemployment was 7.6 percent and the monthly low swooped to seven percent in April of that year, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

This week's figures indicate that recovery from the Great Recession of 2008 is starting to reach a wider

range of demographics, which is good news compared to the past decade.

In the fallout of the financial crisis, unemployment for Black Americans reached 16.8 percent in 2010. That means more than one out of every six African Americans was without work.

In Oregon, unemployment figures based on race are not tracked the same way

“We have to use a different source of data for the Black unemployment rate,

so we can't make a direct comparison with the nation,” said Nick Beleiciks, state employment economist with the Oregon Employment Department, who added that numbers for 2017 are not yet available.

Even so, what the department can provide from previous years tells a bleaker tale for Black Oregonians.

In 2016, the unemployment rate of African

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What to Look for in Next Month's Legislative Session

Health care, transportation, clean air expected to take center stage in February

The Skanner News

The 2018 legislative session starts Feb. 5. It's a short session — the state's regular legislative sessions meet for several months in odd-numbered years, and for a month in even-numbered years.

But a lot can happen in a month. *The Skanner News* reached out to a variety of legislators and advocacy groups to ask what readers should keep their eyes on in the weeks ahead.

The final deadline to file bills is Jan.

16 and submitted bills will not be assigned bill numbers until later this month.

HEALTH CARE

Legislators are keeping a close eye on the fate of Measure 101, the state-wide ballot measure to impose a temporary assessment on some health care organizations in order to fund the state's health care programs. The election is Jan. 23 and its outcome could have critical implications for



The Oregon State Legislature convenes for a special short session Feb. 5.

the state's budget. The bill was put on the ballot by a group of legislators who weren't happy with sections of

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PHOTO BY MOTOYA NAKAMURA/MULTNOMAH CO. State of County, April 21, 2017

Tensions Rise and Subside in County Politics

Commissioner Smith kicks off campaign for city council, while county chair is asked to resign by community members

By *Melanie Sevckenko*
Of The Skanner News

Multnomah County released a statement Tuesday saying Commissioner Loretta Smith and County Chair Deborah Kafoury had their first sit-down meeting over the weekend since a Dec. 21 incident in which Kafoury addressed Smith with an expletive at the end of a county board meeting.

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In this Nov. 13, 2017 photo, a woman with the word “Legalize” painted on her mouth marches against a recent congressional committee vote to make abortion illegal without exception nationwide, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Abortion is currently allowed in cases of rape, a pregnancy that threatens a woman's life or a fetus with anencephaly, but the committee adopted a measure that would remove those exceptions.

Women Speak On Illegal Abortion in Brazil

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Blank Panther Movie Excitement

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