

Oregon seeing more demand for ethnic grocery stores

By **ERICKA CRUZ GUEVARRA**
Oregon Public Broadcasting

PORTLAND — In the small Eastern Oregon border town of Ontario, Djimet Dogo met with more than 150 Congolese, Somali, Iraqi and Syrian refugees living there. They wanted to know: how can we open our own halal store here? Halal refers to food prepared according to Islamic dietary law. They needed answers, as the closest store that sold halal groceries was across the Oregon-Idaho border — about 55 miles away — in Boise.

So Dogo, associate director of the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, hired one Somali taxi driver who would take the orders of the 150-plus immigrants in Ontario, drive an hour to Boise to buy those groceries, and bring them back. Then, funding for the program ran out.

“The families are still calling us,” Dogo said. “The program ended, but the families are growing.”

Oregon’s minority population is rising fast. About 22 percent of Oregonians belong to a minority race or ethnic group. That number is expected to double in the next 40 years.

That growth also means there’s a growing clientele for ethnic grocery stores. The Agricultural Marketing Resource Center found that ethnic food sales are, in fact, being driven by a growing diverse population nationwide.

For people who belong to these communities, this growing need for ethnic grocery stores is being driven by a desire to make Oregon feel more like home.

“The grocery store was



Ericka Cruz Guevarra/OPB

Insil Kang used to drive an hour with her family to go grocery shopping at stores like this G-Mart in Beaverton.

a community center,” said Insil Kang, who’s Korean-American. Kang’s family used to drive an hour from Salem to Beaverton every weekend to shop at the Asian grocery stores there.

“My mom needed that. Whether it was chatting with just the cashier or the good fortune of running to someone in the aisle that she knew, it was her chance to actually be herself. Speak in Korean, catch up. Just be herself fully.”

The Portland metro area alone has more than 40 Asian grocery stores. But studies have shown that people of color are among the hardest hit by Portland’s housing affordability crisis. And for Oregonians outside of Portland, finding ethnic grocery stores is much harder.

“We have more and more people moving out of Portland metro area because of housing affordability — moving to areas like Ontario,

Salem, Woodburn, Eugene or Corvallis,” Dogo said.

“It is a problem. Because they’re moving away from resources.”

You are what you eat

The idea of food as a cultural gateway is not lost on Chet Liew, whose kids are half white and half Chinese. Liew, who’s Chinese, lives in Bend. Getting to an Asian grocery store from there can take more than three hours.

Liew says that’s a reflection of the demographics.

“It is challenging to think about not even just the groceries, but just to take (the kids) to a neighborhood where it’s majority-Asian, where they might see Filipinos and a Korean restaurant and a pho restaurant,” Liew said.

Liew says he longs for the foods of his childhood, in part because he wants his wife and kids to share in the experiences he had growing up. As a kid in the Bay

Area, Liew’s Chinese immigrant parents would take the family on trips to San Francisco’s Chinatown to expose them to their culture. Liew acknowledges that with every new generation of Chinese-Americans in his family, more and more of their cultural heritage gets lost.

“I think so much of your culture identity is around what you eat,” Chet said. “It’s the most accessible; it’s hard for me to speak and teach Chinese to them, but I can certainly cook a pot of fried rice.”

Liew has started thinking about opening up his own Asian grocery store in Bend.

“Food is very symbolic,” Dogo said. “It makes (people) feel like they’re still tied to back home even if they’re here in Oregon. And some of them want their children to know about it: that this is part of our culture and this is what we eat where we came from.”

High court ruling could bring sports gambling back to Oregon

By **ANDREW GREIF**
The Oregonian/OregonLive

PORTLAND — The Oregon Lottery was already planning to introduce betting on virtual sports this year.

But a ruling Monday by the U.S. Supreme Court has opened the door for states to introduce legal betting on real games, too — the type of wagering that bettors in this state once enjoyed for nearly two decades.

In a case brought by New Jersey, which has sought to allow sports gambling at racetracks and casinos, the court struck down the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act, a 1992 law that prohibited state-run sports gambling. It could create wide-ranging ramifications for professional leagues and the NCAA, which has long opposed sports betting to the point it does not hold championship events in states that allow it.

“While we are still reviewing the decision to understand the overall implications to college sports, we will adjust sports wagering and championship policies to align with the direction from the court,” said Donald Remy, the NCAA’s chief legal officer.

States will now be allowed to decide whether to legalize such wagering within their borders. Count the Oregon Lottery as keenly interested in making that happen for the first time since 2007, when the NFL parlay game Sports Action ended after 18 years while the state courted NCAA championship events.

“We have been inter-

ested and have been talking for some time now about reintroducing some level of sports-based play into our portfolio,” said Matt Shelby, a public information manager for the Oregon Lottery.

“We’ve got some history there with a lottery offering, but just exactly what a new offering could look like is too early to say at this point. But we’re very interested.”

Legal sports betting in Oregon was born in 1989, when the state Legislature created Sports Action to help fund athletic departments at the state’s seven public universities. NBA games were added in 1990 but ended after just one season.

The federal act banning state-run sports betting was passed in 1992, but bettors in Oregon could continue wagering because the state was one of four states whose sports lottery games were grandfathered.

The Oregon Legislature’s first attempt to kill it off, and replace the money it provided universities with a percentage of video lottery funds, came in 1999 but quickly fizzled.

Three years earlier, the University of Oregon bid to host NCAA men’s basketball tournament games only to be rebuffed because of the organization’s opposition to the state’s sports betting.

Within two years House Bill 3466 was introduced, which sought to eliminate sports lottery games and replace its funds to athletic departments with a 1 percent cut of the state’s total lottery revenues. Gov. Ted Kulongoski eventually signed the bill in 2007 and legalized sports gambling here was no more.

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Thank you Dr. Gifford for serving our community!

JOSEPH R. GIFFORD, M.D.

After 26 years of continued service to our community, it is with deep respect and gratitude that we announce the retirement of Joseph R. Gifford, M.D., Family Practice Physician. As of April 2018, Dr. Gifford is no longer seeing patients at the Gifford Medical Center.

We wish Dr. Gifford and his family the best of luck as they embark on their new journey.



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