

Changes make it easier for Oregonians to qualify for food stamps

Beginning December 1, more low-income Oregonians have become eligible to receive food stamps for their families, as a result of citizen efforts to open up the food stamp program. Food stamps are now available to all Oregonians at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level, up from 130 percent.

This means that all families who receive free or reduced-price school meals and all families in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, will now qualify for at least \$10

worth of food stamps per month. A family of four now qualifies if their income is less than \$2,628 per month. In addition to the income limit change, household assets such as cars, bank accounts and other resources will no longer be counted.

"One out of eight Oregon households struggles to put food on the table. In nearly two-thirds of those households, the head of the household is working," said Mike Leachman, policy analyst at the Oregon Center for Public Policy. "By in-

creasing the amount of income families can earn before losing their eligibility for food stamps, and by allowing the working families with vehicles to maintain eligibility, Oregon has helped assure that low-income, working parents can keep themselves and their children adequately fed."

Prior to this change, if a family in Oregon owned a car valued at more than \$4,650, they were ineligible for food stamps.

The state's Adult and Family Services of the Department of Human Services, is making the

changes based on a provision in federal law that allows states to create their own eligibility levels for food stamps. Food bank advocates say these changes will help ease the pressures facing many who visit their local food pantries for emergency food relief.

Last year, 515,000 people received emergency food boxes from the Oregon Food

Bank, a 30 percent increase from 1996. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 12.6 percent of all Oregon households struggle to put food on the table.

People interested in applying for food stamps can call the Oregon Food Stamp Toll-Free Hotline at 1-800-SAFENET (1-800-723-3638; 503-723-3638 in Portland).

Director named for Tech Center

The Columbia Foundation has named Genell Grow as director of the Columbia Technology Center (CTC). Genell has been managing the CTC since June of this year and has also served for the past four months as Interim Executive Director for the Foundation. With the

hiring of the Foundation's new Executive Director, Lynne Cox, Director Grow is now free to concentrate her efforts on the CTC.

Genell joined the CTC in April of 1997 as a computer class instructor. She concurrently attended Portland Community College, majoring in Computer Information Systems. In 1998, she became the primary computer class instructor for the CTC and shortly thereafter moved into the position of Education Manager. One year later, Genell assumed responsibility for the entire Technology Center, as the Director.

Governor's budget

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ganization is the Governor's proposal to increase funding for higher education. As the state's largest business association, AOI has consistently advocated a well-funded higher education system as a key to continued economic success for Oregon.

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*Tis the season to be jolly, so take a few
precautions to keep your holidays happy!*



Don't let that glow in the sky be your home. Play it safe with these precautions. Remember, fire only needs a chance — don't give it one.

- Keep matches well out of reach of children.
- Be sure your smoke alarm is working properly.
- Have a fire extinguisher in your home at all times.
- Don't place your tree near a fireplace or heater.

- Check your Christmas lights for frayed or exposed wires, loose connections or broken sockets before you put them up.
- Make sure your tree is securely anchored in a tree stand and kept well watered.
- Don't use indoor Christmas lights or extension cords outside.
- Don't overload circuits or have too many plugs in one socket.
- Turn off and unplug all Christmas lights, indoors and out, before going to bed.
- Use flame-resistant or non-flammable decorations. If they are not labeled flame-resistant, don't buy them!
- Makeshift ladders are the number one cause of injury during the holiday season. Be careful what you stand on.



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