

Nick's Newsletter

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NICK
FISH
Commissioner
of Public Works

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Season of Service

Dear Friends,

On the night of November 4th, President-elect Barack Obama issued a challenge to all Americans to "summon a new spirit of patriotism; of service and responsibility where each of us resolves to pitch in and work harder and look after not only ourselves, but each other."

As you're preparing for holiday festivities, I encourage you to embrace this spirit of service and give back however you can – time, funds, goods, or advocacy – to one of the many worthy non-profits in the Portland area.

Many Portlanders are struggling to make ends meet this season. In this issue you will learn about ways to help eliminate hunger and keep the homeless warm and dry in the midst of this chilly weather.



Mural by Mr. Brainwash, shown at the SCOPE Art Fair Miami 2008.

Hunger in Oregon



During these tough times, more than 50,000 Oregonians will go to bed hungry tonight. Last month, the US Department of Agriculture ranked Oregon 3rd in the nation in percentage of hunger,

and this last quarter the [Oregon Food Bank](#) reported a 13% increase in emergency food box requests.

Early this month, Mayor Tom Potter and I invited OFB Executive Director Rachel Bristol and Board Chair Phil Kalberer to address Council about this alarming trend. We learned that OFB's food supplies are stretched very thin.

I challenge all of us who care about our community to support OFB's efforts and take this issue to the next level and donate. Here are some ways you can help:

- **Donate food.** Bring nonperishable items to your nearest Jiffy Lube or U.S. Bank.
- **Organize a food drive.** Transport food directly to the OFB or any Jiffy Lube or U.S. Bank location.
- **Donate funds.** Give online at the OFB website.
- **Donate time.** Find the food pantry nearest you and volunteer - especially after the holidays!
- **Advocate.** Ask your elected officials what they are doing to create family-wage jobs during these difficult times.

Oregon Food Bank directly impacts the quality of people's lives and health – every day. To find out more about their work, visit OFB's website at www.oregonfoodbank.org.

Winter Warming Centers

Everyone deserves a safe, warm place to call home, especially during the holidays. Portland's severe winter weather threatens the health and safety of some of our city's most vulnerable. Each night 1,400 people spend the night on the street or in shelters, and the number of homeless people is rising.

In response, the City of Portland and Multnomah County have partnered with [Human Solutions](#), [JOIN](#), [Transition Projects, Inc.](#), and [Key Bank](#) to open two Winter Warming Centers to provide basic shelter to people experiencing homelessness in Multnomah County

during the winter months. These Warming Centers provide a much-needed bridge to safety for vulnerable families and individuals.

JOIN is providing facilities for one Warming Center, for families, at 1435 NE 81st Avenue, open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day; a second location downtown is opening soon to serve individuals.

For more information about how you can help, call Human Solutions at 503-548-0228 or Transition Projects, Inc. at 503-823-4930.

Spirit of Portland Awards



Spirit of Portland
Awards 2008

I was excited to present several “[Spirit of Portland](#)” awards on December 11th in City Council.

Since 1985, the City has annually presented Spirit of Portland awards to individuals, businesses, and community organizations to recognize their outstanding contributions to improving our quality of life here in Portland. I was honored to present awards to the following outstanding groups and individuals:

- **Mayor’s Award:** [p:ear](#)
- **Mayor’s Award:** [The Standard](#)
- **Community Crime Prevention:** Carl Leonard Roberts
- **Independent Spirit:** [Coalition for a Livable Future](#)
- **Community Harmony:** Norm Costa
- **Non-Profit Organization:** [Street Roots](#)

Visit the Spirit of Portland web page at [Portland Online](#) to learn more about these and other worthy recipients of this year’s awards.

Hands On Greater Portland



Photo courtesy David Ashton, East Portland News

On a crisp Saturday morning in November, County Commissioner Jeff Cogen and I, together with [Hands On Greater Portland](#), hosted a volunteer painting project at Jason Lee Elementary School in NE Portland. With the help of dozens of volunteers we managed to paint the dark hallways of this elementary school with two fresh white coats of paint. We had so

much fun that we've decided to do this a few times a year – and you are invited!

[Watch a candid video](#) of us, our staffs, and volunteers talking about why community service is so important. And remember to think of Hands On Greater Portland whenever you're interested in plugging into a meaningful community service project.

Changes at City Hall

This month marks the end of Mayor Tom Potter's term of service as Mayor of Portland. I congratulate Mayor Potter on his work for the residents of our City. Please join over a dozen community members in bidding farewell to Mayor Potter on December 18th at 6 p.m. in the City Hall Atrium. For more information, contact wegbert@ci.portland.or.us.

January brings a new year and a new City Council. Check out the Oregonian's great ['sneak peek' at Portland's new City Council](#).

Short Takes: Where we've been and where we're going

Here's a look back at some of the highlights from November, and some upcoming events you may want to have on your radar:

11/11 NE Portland [Veterans Day Parade](#)

- 11/27 My daughter and I volunteered with [Loaves & Fishes](#)
- 12/3 [First Thursday](#) celebration at City Hall
- 12/13 Pacific Northwest College of Art ([PNCA](#)) presents the [PNCA Youth Exhibition](#)
- 12/18 Farewell to Mayor Tom Potter at City Hall

Staff list

The [Fish Team](#) welcomes our new Public Advocate, George Hocker. We are continuously learning new and better ways to bring you timely and interesting news that you care about. For example, I now have a [Facebook page](#) that I hope you'll check out.

We look forward to hearing from you!

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Binnsmead Middle School students with Nick

I hope you enjoyed this edition of Nick's Newsletter.

As always, please feel free to contact my office with any ideas, questions, or concerns.

Sincerely,

Nick Fish,
Commissioner, City of Portland