

The Portland Tribune

Man charged with stealing Portland Fire & Rescue engine

By Pamplin Media Group

November 23, 2019

Brandon Vandewalker, 25, was arrested after police say he drove off in the fire truck on Northeast Broadway on Friday.

Portland police arrested a man after he allegedly boosted a firetruck in Northeast Portland on Friday, Nov. 22.

North Precinct officers responded to Northeast Broadway near 15th Avenue around 4:48 p.m. after hearing reports that a Portland Fire & Rescue engine had been stolen. Firefighters were searching a building after receiving a three-alarm alert at the time.

Officers and first responders say the truck was recovered "minutes later" after police stopped the vehicle near North Greeley Avenue and Going Street.

Brandon Michael Vandewalker, 25, faces charges of unauthorized use of a vehicle and first-degree aggravated theft.

Fire Chief Sara Boone said the bureau would review its internal policies to prevent similar instances from happening again. Boone said she was "relieved" no one was injured.

"I want the public to know that we do not take the theft and reckless operation of the city's emergency response apparatus lightly," Boone said in a statement. "I would like to thank the firefighters from Engine Three for their quick action and the Portland Police officers for their quick response and closure to this."

Vandewalker remains at the downtown jail at this time.

Willamette Week

Portland Police Arrest Man for Allegedly Starting Massive Fire in Northeast Portland

By Sophie Peel

November 25, 2019

On Sept. 1, nearly a week after the devastating grass fire, police say Allen Singerhouse set fires at two separate dumpsters.

A man who Portland police say started a grass fire and set off a four-alarm blaze along Northeast 82nd Avenue this August was arrested Thursday and charged with seven counts of arson.

The August fire sent plumes of dark smoke into the air that lingered for hours and could be seen from miles away. Residents in nearby buildings were forced to evacuate, and the police bureau reports that damages caused exceeded \$1 million in property damages. Five homes and two business were severely damaged, including a boxing gym.

The fire reached a car lot being rented by a nearby auto shop, angering the flames and causing the fire to spread further. The field where the fire started has gone undeveloped for close to 20

years, but almost became a Walmart 12 years ago. Neighbors ultimately squashed the deal and drove out potential big-box developers.

Police say the fire was one of several set this year by 39-year old Allen Singerhouse.

On Sept. 1, nearly a week after the field fire that left residential and business buildings in ruins, police say Singerhouse set fires at two separate dumpsters: one at the Concordia University campus and one at a Michael's craft store, both located in Northeast Portland.

The police bureau said in a statement it was able to identify Singerhouse through video surveillance of the August fire and one of the September fires, obtained during the investigation. When police released an arrest warrant and searched Singerhouse, they found two pipes suspected of being used for methamphetamine use.

According to court documents, Singerhouse initially denied starting the fires, but later admitted to intentionally setting them after police questioned inconsistencies in his narrative.

The police characterized Singerhouse's intentional fires as "some of the most devastating arson crimes to hit Portland in recent memory."

The investigation that identified Singerhouse as the culprit in the recent fires was a joint effort between Portland Police and Portland Fire and Rescue.

WinCo Foods Faces a Lawsuit Alleging False Advertising of Prices Without Including Portland Clean Energy Fund Surcharge

*By Rachel Monahan
November 25, 2019*

Another lawsuit filed over the way companies are passing the costs of the Portland Clean Energy Fund onto consumers.

A lawsuit filed in Multnomah County Circuit Court today alleges that the grocery store chain WinCo Foods engaged in false advertising by not disclosing the full price of non-grocery item subject to an additional tax in Portland.

The Portland Clean Energy Fund surcharge, passed by voters last year, places an extra 1 percent charge on the business license tax for companies with at least \$500,000 in sales in Portland and a billion dollars nationally.

The money is expected to go to projects like solar panels and energy efficiency upgrades, particularly in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods.

WinCo has been adding the tax to receipts at the end, but not disclosing the price in marketing.

Companies are allowed to pass on the cost of the measure to consumers. But the lawsuit argues they should have to include that total price in its advertising.

"Defendant made false or misleading representations of fact concerning plaintiff and other class members' cost for its consumer goods by falsely telling plaintiff and other class members that its consumer goods could be purchased for a certain price," states the class action complaint filed by Rachel Miller, who shopped at the Southeast Powell WinCo.

"In fact defendant knew and should have known that defendant would add and collect from plaintiff and other class members a hidden surcharge in addition to the advertised price of its consumer goods," the complaint continues.

Miller apparently discovered the price discrepancy by reading her receipt, and finding the additional surcharge after she paid.

WinCo "added and collected a hidden nine cent surcharge in addition to the advertised price of its nongrocery consumer goods to plaintiff, causing plaintiff ascertainable loss of nine cents," the complaint states.

A representative of WinCo Foods did not return a call seeking comment.

"I'm personally disappointed that WinCo would engage in this type of false advertising," says lawyer Michael Fuller, who is representing Miller. "I generally like WinCo. I grew up shopping at WinCo in Hillsboro back when it was called Waremart. I hope WinCo will promptly refund the statutory penalties to each customer ripped off by its unlawful hidden charge."

The Portland Business Journal

Hacienda CDC expands affordable housing close to home and farther east

*By Christina Williams
November 25, 2019*

Hacienda Community Development Corp. is working with the Portland Bureau of Transportation on a plan for increased pedestrian traffic across NE Killingsworth St. once a planned \$54.1 million, 141-unit affordable housing building goes up on the site of a former strip club.

"We want to accommodate the increased cross traffic we're anticipating and make it safer," said Rose Ojeda, director of real estate development for Hacienda CDC.

A safe pedestrian crossing will make it easier for residents of the new building to access health and community services located at the Hacienda CDC campus across the street. Hacienda, a 27-year-old provider of affordable housing, homeownership support, economic advancement and educational opportunities for Portland's Latino community, is also looking to expand its reach beyond the Cully neighborhood where it is based.

That's why Hacienda is teaming up with Community Development Partners on a \$63 million, 224-unit apartment complex in the Rockwood neighborhood of Gresham that will market homes to renters making 70 percent or less of the local median income and provide services and community activities — on-site amenities will include a green space and city park — delivered by Hacienda CDC.

"We're interested in venturing out beyond Cully," Ojeda said. "We're looking at the Metro bond funding (for affordable housing development) and opportunities we can explore in Washington and Clackamas counties."

Hacienda CDC has one housing complex in Molalla aimed at farm workers but the rest of its housing portfolio is in Multnomah County. The two new projects in Portland and Gresham will almost double its current housing portfolio of 381 units.

The Cully neighborhood project, named Las Adelitas after women who fought in the Mexican Revolution, is a symbol of renewal for the neighborhood. It will go up on the site of a former strip club, the infamous Sugar Shack, which was purchased and demolished by community groups with the support of philanthropic funding.

Ojeda said the design for Las Adelitas incorporates ample space — a huge 7,000 square-foot event hall and adjoining plaza — for community events, part of the original vision for the demolished Sugar Shack lot.

"The goal is to make the event hall available to the variety of nonprofits in our neighborhood who bring a lot of services to our community," Ojeda said. There are no immediate plans for retail space, though Ojeda said the plaza would be able to accommodate food carts during events. A second phase of development might bring retail to the east end of the development where a second lot could accommodate another building. Ojeda said about half of the funding for Las Adelitas has been secured, including \$16.2 million from the Portland Housing Bond. She expects the balance to come from low-income housing tax credit financing and possibly some state funding. The bulk of the 141 units will go to households earning 60 percent or less of the area median income with 47 units set aside for extremely low income renters (30 percent or less of the area median income) and 15 units for homeless individuals. Ojeda expects Las Adelitas construction to begin this summer. The project in Gresham is on a faster timeline. The property is expected to close in December, said Jessica Woodruff, director of development for Community Development Partners, with construction slated to begin in January. "We're calling it the Rockwood 10 project for now," Woodruff said. "But we're undergoing a community engagement process to name the building."