



OREGON AT NO. 2

EXPECTATIONS ARE SKY-HIGH FOR THE DUCKS THIS SEASON. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN PROGRAM HISTORY, OREGON CAME IN AT NO. 2 IN THE PRESEASON ASSOCIATED PRESS POLL. **B1**

NORTHWEST PORTLAND

Centennial Mills demolition rocks Portland in controlled blast



Demolition crews used explosives to bring down the water tank at the top of the Centennial Mills wreckage, the first step toward demolishing the structure after a fire. *Photos by Beth Nakamura, staff*

An explosion demolished the water tower of Portland’s historic Centennial Mills building.

Tarek Anthony and Jonathan Bach
The Oregonian/OregonLive

A planned explosion rocked Northwest Portland on Monday as contractors began demolishing the burned-out Centennial Mills building in the Pearl District. The massive explosion could be heard across much of the city two weeks after fire tore through the century-old abandoned flour mill. The blast brought the water tower crumbling down into the shell of the old building. Hundreds of onlookers crowded near the “exclusion zone” Monday morning in anticipation of the blast, which came at 2:30 p.m. sharp. The deafening explosion and ensuing fireball sent a shockwave through the crowd, like a quick shake to the shoulders. The burst uncorked their adrenaline:



People gathered around the perimeter of the Centennial Mills building to catch a glimpse of the demolition of the water tower that sat atop the building.

shocked expletives erupted as ashen building debris drifted down onto the collapse zone and surrounding streets and sidewalks. Among the quotes most suitable for print were, “That was awesome!” and “That was cool!” According to city officials, the demolition went as planned, with the water tower falling into the center of the building. Despite fire officials’ warnings that the building was at imminent risk of collapse following the



blaze on Aug. 2, the warehouse withstood the blast as intended, avoiding officials’ long list of contingency plans should the building fall. Eric Kutch, director of Portland Permitting and Development, said in a statement afterward that the operation was a success. “We are pleased with the outcome. The demolition contractor will now prepare **SEE NORTHWEST PORTLAND, A2**

OREGON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Leadership fight brewing at state’s largest teachers union

The union has long been one of the state’s most influential political interest groups, and a key donor to Democrats.

Julia Silverman *The Oregonian/OregonLive*

Political jockeying inside the state’s largest teachers union is reaching new heights, half a dozen members and educators represented by the Oregon Education Association told The Oregonian/OregonLive last week. President Enrique Farrera could face at least three and possibly more challengers

when he runs for a second two-year term helping the organization, which has long been one of the state’s most influential political interest groups, and a key donor to Democrats. The union has grappled with internal debate in recent years, with a relatively small but influential faction of members pushing for a more activist and anti-capitalist agenda out of frustration that state investment in public schools has not grown as rapidly as they believe is needed. That has put the union at odds in some cases with the Democratic Party establishment; it has yet to endorse Gov. Tina Kotek’s bid for reelection. There is historical precedent for contested elections for the union presidency and other key leadership roles, accord-

ing to both former OEA President Reed Scott-Schwalbach and Director of Public Affairs Emily McLain. Scott-Schwalbach said such contests ultimately make for a “stronger democratic system.” But handbooks from previous union gatherings at which candidates are invited to outline their platforms suggest that it is unusual for there to be more than one challenger for the presidency, let alone three. Farrera’s challengers include a former elected regional leader, union committee member and a current board member. Two educators who are close ideological allies, Eric McGuire, a social studies teacher at Centennial Middle School in Gresham, and Stephen Siegel, a special **SEE EDUCATION , A2**

IMMIGRATION

Dexter makes unannounced visit to ICE detention center

Up to 140 people may be taking part in a hunger strike at the regional immigration center in Washington state.

Yesenia Amaro
The Oregonian/OregonLive

U.S. Rep. Maxine Dexter on Saturday made an unannounced visit to the regional immigration detention center in Tacoma following reports of a hunger strike, inedible food and poor living conditions and said she walked away feeling uncertain about the answers detention officials provided. The first-term Democrat has pitched herself as a fierce advocate for individuals and families hurt by the Trump administration’s aggressive immigration crackdown and has raised awareness about conditions at several detention centers. She has also helped free some of her constituents, including children, from immigration centers in Texas and Washington. Following her visit to the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, which The Geo Group privately runs for the federal government, Dexter said she received contradictory information about what’s happening in the center from an official and a detainee who said he was among those taking part in the hunger strike. In early 2023, The GEO Group denied hunger strikes at two California detention centers, but U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement confirmed them a few days later. “It is incredibly frustrating to me that as a government official, as a member of Congress, I cannot get straight, accurate information from a group that is being paid by taxpayers, a for-profit institution,” Dexter said after her visit. **SEE IMMIGRATION, A3**



Rep. Maxine Dexter, D-Oregon, speaks during a Jan. 14 news conference to introduce articles of impeachment against Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem.
Bill Clark, CQ-Roll Call via Getty Images

NATION

Latest Trump threat

President Donald Trump has again threatened Oman amid Iran war. **A6**

LIFE

Actress dies at 36

Hayden Panettiere starred in TV series including “Heroes” and “Nashville.” **A10**