

NEWS OF THE WEST

OHSU appoints a new president

PORTLAND (AP) — Oregon Health & Science University has chosen an insider as its next president.

Dr. Joseph Robertson Jr., dean of the School of Medicine and vice president of medical affairs, was chosen Tuesday over two outside finalists. In September, he will succeed Dr. Peter Kohler, OHSU's leader for 18 years.

Kohler, 67, helped turn OHSU from a low-profile state school into a research-focused public corporation that has become Portland's largest employer. OHSU had a \$254 million budget when Kohler started in 1988, and it is \$1.2 billion today. OHSU has undergone several major recent physical expansions, including a new biomedical research building, patient care building and a sprawling massive new waterfront campus and a new city tram connecting it to the main campus. Kohler initially planned to retire 2003, but stayed on to guide the expansion.

"I am honored to be given the opportunity to lead OHSU," Robertson, 53, said. "There are many exciting things going on."

Robertson came to OHSU as a resident in 1979 and has worked his way up in numerous roles, including serving as director of the Casey Eye Institute. He became the dean of the state's only medical school in 2003 after serving as its interim dean.

As dean, he increased enrollment in the medical school in anticipation of a physician short-

age, developed education partnerships with the University of Oregon and several upcoming partners. And he recruited more than 150 new doctors and Ph.D. faculty members. The school moved up in the National Institutes of Health ranking from 22nd to 23rd place, with 10 School of Medicine departments in the top 15 of the NIH rankings under his leadership.

Robertson beat out two outside finalists for the position. Jay Gerber of the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and Paul Whelton from Tulane University Health Sciences Center.

"The search committee feels that Dr. Robertson is the best choice for OHSU and for Oregonians," Henry Hewitt, OHSU board member and chairman of the OHSU Presidential Search Committee, said in a statement.

As the new president, Robertson said he would be starting with a head full of ideas. He has to submit DNA material for a better statewide safety net, expand medical education around the state and continue the growth of OHSU research, including potential commercialization of research-based medicine.

"While OHSU's physical campus spans a few hundred acres, we must serve all 98,000 square miles of the state of Oregon," Robertson said.

Robertson said he couldn't imagine a more exciting job or one he'd be more happy to lead to each morning than this.

Murder suspect cleared after six months in jail

■ Evidence: Wait at crime lab stalled case.

McMINNVILLE (AP) — A former Dayton man jailed for six months while awaiting trial for attempted murder is free after crime lab tests showed his innocence.

The Yamhill County district attorney's office has dropped all charges against Thomas Aaron Wright, 56, arrested Jan. 13 and charged in the brutal beating of his former landlord, Erwin Hicks III, 52, in December.

Evidence consisted of a metal coat rack with bloody fingerprints containing DNA and Hicks' statement that he believed Wright was the attacker who bludgeoned him and left him outside his Dayton residence in 29-degree weather.

Hicks was in a coma for some time.

He said Wright came to his house the night of Dec. 10 to collect some clothes he had left and that he had received threatening phone calls from Wright.

Wright said he was told five times in Pacific City, had witnesses to prove it, and had made no calls of any kind to Hicks.

Results of fingerprint and DNA tests confirm Wright's innocence. Wright said he was told five times in Pacific City, had witnesses to prove it, and had made no calls of any kind to Hicks.

Meanwhile, Chief Deputy District Attorney Cynthia Easterday offered Wright a life detector test. But Wright said the offer didn't match him for months. So Wright and his family focused on getting his \$500,000 bail reduced.

Wright took and passed a life detector test the week lab results showed the fingerprints and DNA were not his.

"I'm pretty mad," he said. "I had to prove my innocence. It was completely ridiculous."

Wright said he was painting the front door of his mother's house when he discovered it. He said his mother confirmed his alibi but that he was arrested anyway.

Based on lab detector tests and fingerprint results, he said, his bond was cut to \$50,000 and he was freed.

He figured he could attend his daughter's wedding in Florida, for which he had a June 20 flight. But due to the seriousness of the charge, they still pending, he was barred from leaving the state.

Authorities told him they were dropping the case on June 22, too late for the wedding.



Flames from a brush fire flare out of control Tuesday near Yucca Valley, Calif. The wildfire burned several structures in a desert locale where dozens of Hollywood Westerns were filmed and prompted 1,000 people to flee.

Wildfire burns structures at movie site

YUCCA VALLEY, Calif. (AP) — A wildfire burned several structures in a desert community where dozens of Hollywood Westerns were filmed, and threatened other towns while prompting 1,000 people to flee.

Winds up to 20 mph fanned the fire across 6,000 acres, said Doug Lannon, a battalion chief for the California Department of Forestry. The fire had originally started as part of a series of lightning-sparked blazes. It was brought under control, but erupted again.

The blaze burned through historic Pioneertown, and television news footage showed several structures burned to the ground. Lannon couldn't immediately say what the structures were.

About 200 homes were threatened, said forestry Capt. Debbie Chapman.

About 600 firefighters aided by

six helicopters and six air tankers were working the blaze, which prompted mandatory evacuations of Pioneertown, Rimrock, Gnamma Gulch, Pines Canyon and Bowden Flats.

Pioneertown, about two hours east of Los Angeles, was host to Roy Rogers, Russ "Lucky" Hayden and other Hollywood cowboys who helped establish the desert landscape in 1946. Movie crews nailed together a saloon, hauled up a railroad car and sank posts around the "OK Corral."

"Gene Autry filmed 'Last of the Pony Riders' and 'Indian Territory' in Pioneertown. Hayden, of Hopalong Cassidy fame, used it for his 'Judge Roy Bean' TV series, and 'Cinco Kid' producers shot several movies and the TV series there.

By the 1960s, the town had become more of a residential com-

munity, although filmmakers began returning a few years ago. Car companies have filmed commercials in Pioneertown in recent years. Music videos have also been collected there.

Carol Post, owner of Pioneertown's Red Dog Saloon, said the fire surged within a block or two of her home in Yucca Valley before the wind shifted, pushing the flames north.

"It was really scary," said Post, 70. "It was a wall of flame." She said that she rushed to Pioneertown to check on her bar but that fire officials barred access.

Elsewhere in the West, Montana firefighters were trying to control a blaze about 40 miles west of Billings that had destroyed at least one home and four other buildings, officials said.

Authorities urged residents to

about 1200 homes to leave because of the 1,000-acre fire. Five structures were destroyed, officials said. No injuries were reported.

In Nevada, officials said they had gained the upper hand on two lightning-sparked wildfires burning toward the small town of Beatty, near Death Valley National Park. The blazes were fully contained by Tuesday night. No injuries were reported and no structures had been threatened.

In western Stanislaus County, Calif., a fire that burned about 5 square miles of rugged terrain was about 40 percent contained Tuesday.

No evacuations were ordered as about 1,000 firefighters fought the blaze, which started Sunday about 85 miles southeast of San Francisco. The fire destroyed three structures believed to be hunting cabins.

PUC upholds decision on PacifiCorp rate hike

SALEM (AP) — The Oregon Public Utility Commission reaffirmed its decision to apply a new law when it cut PacifiCorp's request for a 12.5 percent rate increase to 3.2 percent last fall.

PacifiCorp had challenged the commission's application of Senate Bill 408, which deals with how much utilities can charge ratepayers for estimated income tax expenses. The challenge led to further PUC review and Tuesday's decision to

uphold the smaller rate increase.

"I believe we have taken a fair and reasonable approach to implement the intent of the new utility law that weighs the interests of both the utility and its customers," Commission Chairman Lee Byer said in a statement. "It is extremely complex, but in the end we are confident it results in a balanced approach."

Though the commission backed its decision, it reduced the

tax adjustment slightly, concluding that PacifiCorp should cut its income tax expense by \$12.7 million, not the \$16.1 million outlined in the initial order.

The adjustment will result in an additional overall rate increase of 0.74 percent, roughly 50 cents a month for an average residential customer who uses 1,000 kilowatt hours.

Oregon lawmakers enacted the utility income-tax law to address

growing concerns that energy companies were collecting income tax expenses in rates that are not ultimately paid to taxing authorities.

The law's advocates include customer groups such as the Citizens' Utility Board and the Industrial Customers of Northwest Utilities.

In the request for reconsideration, PacifiCorp argued the commission's application of the Senate bill in the rate order was overly broad, premature and unlawful.

OBITUARIES

Obituaries are paid announcements. Information is provided by mortuaries and family members. Contact mortuaries for information.

Billy Leon Brent

April 9, 1951 - July 8, 2006

A graduate service with vault interment for Billy Leon Brent, 71, of North Bend, will be held at 11 a.m., Friday, July 14, at Sunset Memorial Park, 6360 Millington Freeway Road, Coos Bay. Don Berney, of New Beginnings Christian Fellowship and Bay Area American Legion Post No. 34, will officiate.

Billy was born April 9, 1951, in Weiser, Idaho, the son of Leon and Dorothy (Hicks) Brent. He died July 8, 2006, in North Bend.



Billy Brent

Billy was a member of the U.S. Air Force and a veteran of both World War II and Vietnam, where he served two tours. He retired from the Air Force after 20 years, as master sergeant. Billy loved, and lived for, the Air Force and his military career. He received many decorations. He was

a member of the Disabled American Veterans and the Bay Area American Legion, Post No. 34. He married Ella Costley May 14, 1973, in Woodburn. He worked as a security guard for Weyerhaeuser and the Charleston Marina. Billy was a resident of Las Vegas for a time prior to returning to Coos Bay to be closer to family and friends, especially Easter, and holidays, especially Easter, spending time with his grand- and great-grandchildren. He also enjoyed computers, collecting coins with his grandsons, Barry, and quiet time. He was preceded in death by his parents and wife.

He is survived by stepdaughters and their husbands, Marlene and Gary Fellows of Coos Bay, and Dixie and John Fox, of Coquille; two stepgrandchildren, Colleen Barr and husband, Randy of Coos Bay, and Kevin Fellows and wife Jessica, of North Bend, and five great-grandchildren. Barry Hochfelder and Heidi Barr of Coos Bay and Cassandra, Whitney and Emma Fellows, all of North Bend.

Memorial contributions can be sent to the Disabled American Veterans, P.O. Box 1136, Coos Bay, OR 97331, or the Bay Area American Legion, Post No. 34, P.O. Box 234, North Bend, OR 97359.

Arrangements are under the direction of Coos Bay Chapel, 267-3131.

Sign the guestbook at <http://www.theworldlink.com>

'Bub' Peerson

Nov. 18, 1940 - July 9, 2006

Gravestone services for "Bub" Peerson, 66, of Myrtle Point, will be held at 2 p.m. Thursday, July 13, at Myrtle Coast Memorial Gardens, 94105 Rink Creek Lane, Coquille. Bub was born Nov. 18, 1940, in Myrtle Point, the son of Walter and Ruth Peerson. He died July 9, 2006, in Roseburg.

He served in the U.S. Army during Vietnam. Following his time in the military, he returned to Coos County, where he fished, hunted and collected old cars.

Bub is survived by his son, Rick Peerson, daughter and son-in-law, Amy and Brian Chavez, mother, Ruth Peerson; brother and sister-in-law, Kenneth and Kathy Peerson, sisters and brothers-in-law, Bonnie and Don Babow, Karen and Dick Downs; stepdaughter, Lesley Bennett, nine grandchildren; and his beloved dog, Elrod.

Arrangements are under the

direction of Atling/Schroeder Funeral Service, Coquille Chapel, 396-3846.

Sign the guestbook at <http://www.theworldlink.com>

DEATH NOTICES

BERRY R. LICON — 58, of Roseburg, died July 9, 2006, in Roseburg. Arrangements are pending with Dunes Memorial Chapel, (541) 271-2822.

Frederick R. McMillan — 87, of North Bend, died July 10, 2006, in North Bend. Arrangements are pending with Myrtle Grove Funeral Service-Bay Area, 269-2851.

Michael L. Thomas — 49, of Lincoln City, died June 12, in Lincoln City.

Max Ace Clehon — 79, of Bandon, died July 10, 2006, in Bandon. Arrangements are pending with Nelson's Bay Area Mortuary, 287-4216.

Howard R. Pierce — 65, of Coos Bay, died June 18, 2006, in Coos Bay.

We would like to thank the Coquille High School class of 2006 for the most wonderful gift presented in memory of our beloved Ayla Andrew Kinzie. The red and white salt stamped with their hand prints and names is truly a treasure gift to us and a lifetime.

Thank you for your continued support and loyalty to us and Ayla throughout your remaining high school years. We would be most grateful if you could be reconnected and involved in your activities. You have given us a part of your time and helped us have something to look forward to.

A special thank you to Don Harrington, Carl Leland and Jennifer Galt, Carleen, Jeff and Stacey Cuckton, John Brent, the Coquille High School staff and students, Ronni and Scott McMillan, Karen Thomas and so many others who were helpful during this very difficult time.

God Bless You All.
Ayla's Parents
Carl, Karen and Stacy Foster & Katie and Kimberly Kinzie



Thank You

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Mortuary

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and Operated by
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