

FALL 2015 • PREMIERE ISSUE

# MULTCO

THE MAGAZINE  
OF MULTNOMAH COUNTY

## Making it home

HOW AN EFFORT  
TO END VETERAN  
HOMELESSNESS  
HELPED PULL  
JOHN ENGLISH  
BACK FROM  
THE BRINK

PAGE 12

# A note from Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury

Hello, and welcome to the debut issue of the county's new magazine, **MultCo**.

This quarterly publication, produced by the county's Communications Office, is designed to share with you stories and information about how Multnomah County government serves its residents.

At the county, we do our best to help seniors and the disabled. We provide critical services to people facing mental health issues. We aid survivors of domestic violence. We assist those struggling to find a way out of the spiral created by drug and alcohol addictions. And we bring comfort to homeless families.

We also maintain 27 bridges and service nearly 300 miles of roads. Our libraries help students with homework, job seekers looking for employment and book enthusiasts in finding that perfect novel. And we help maintain public safety by running the local jails and working with people on parole or probation.

“Every three months, we will provide a broader look into the issues faced by our community and take you behind the scenes to show you the great work of Multnomah County employees.”

• [CHAIR DEBORAH KAFOURY](#)

ness can make a difference in the lives of families.

I hope you enjoy reading MultCo. Please let us know what you think about the content or if you have any ideas for additional stories. You can reach the Communications Office by sending an email to [communications@multco.us](mailto:communications@multco.us) or calling 503-988-3308.

You can also go online at [multco.us](http://multco.us) to find out more about the county and its services.



As you can see, that's a pretty lengthy list. And it only covers a part of what we do.

Every three months, we will provide a broader look into the issues faced by our community and take you behind the scenes to show you the great work of Multnomah County employees.

In this issue, you'll read about Dwight Myrick, a community health worker with the county's STRYVE program. His is a story of redemption — rising above a life of crime to help at-risk youth avoid violence. You'll also meet Roy Iwai, the manager of the county's water quality program, whose childhood field trip to a marine biology lab sparked a lifelong love of the environment.

And the cover story on John English shows how a community-wide effort to end veteran homeless-



## On the cover:

John English joined the U.S. Marines in the 1970s at 18 and served his country. Later in life, he fell on hard times and found himself without a permanent home.

But under a bold program that's seeking to end homelessness among veterans, English and his son now have an apartment and the stability that comes with it.

[“A Home for Every Veteran”](#) is the name of the project that partners with the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Housing and Urban Development to find landlords who will help veterans get a fresh start. Since January, roughly 450 veterans have been housed. Still, there are another 240 who need help.

To see how English, a Frank Sinatra impressionist, turned things around with help from this innovative program, turn to Page 12.

COVER PHOTO BY  
RANDY COX



# MULTCO

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on the web: [multco.us](http://multco.us)



## Stop the violence

Dwight Myrick made a choice when his criminal behavior caught up with him. He chose to help others.

**PAGE 6**



## By the numbers

Want to learn some interesting facts about Multnomah County? Check out these stats on the most populous county in Oregon.

**PAGE 4**

## MultCo Time Capsule

We look back at how an old stunt team from the Sheriff's Office used to thrill the public.

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## In our Winter issue

Julie Sullivan-Springhetti writes about the Multnomah County Health Department's "disease detectives." These investigators use cutting-edge skills to keep the community healthy. Learn how they do it in the next issue of MultCo.

## Questions for: Roy Iwai

Roy Iwai's childhood visit to a biology lab changed his life. How does Multnomah County's water resources specialist see his job?

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How to reach us at MultCo

**Email:** [communications@multco.us](mailto:communications@multco.us)

**Editor:**  
David Austin  
503.988.3308

# By the Numbers

# 6,014

Number of employees working for the county



## 766,135

Population of Multnomah County  
(77th largest county in the country)

# 359

Number of 20-somethings employed by Multnomah County

## 10 million

Weight in pounds of structural steel in the spans of the [new Sellwood Bridge](#)

# 24,719

Number of children and adults served by the county's [SUN Community Schools](#)

## 71,987

Number of patients under the care of Multnomah County's [Health Department clinics](#) in 2014



# 300

MILES OF [ROAD](#) MAINTAINED BY MULTNOMAH COUNTY'S COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

## 1,079,184

Number of Wi-fi sessions logged at [county library](#) branches from July 2014 through June 2015



## 7,766

MARRIAGE LICENSES ISSUED IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY FROM JULY 2014 THROUGH JUNE 2015

## 972

[Marriage licenses](#) issued to same-sex couples over the same time period

## 19,784

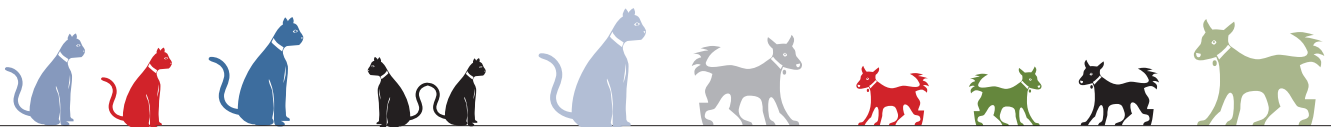
Number of inmates booked into Multnomah County jails from July 2014 through June 2015

## 74,864

NUMBER OF CALLS TO THE MENTAL HEALTH CALL CENTER FROM JULY 2014 THROUGH JUNE 2015

## 2,054

Number of dogs and cats adopted from the county's [Animal Services shelter](#) from July 2014 through June 2015





# STRYVE-ing to make things right

Multnomah County's Dwight Myrick uses his personal experience to help youth think about their life choices

By Koji Wieber

Multco Communications Office

It's close to 100 degrees outside and Dwight Myrick's right arm is tiring under the weight of a video camera. He's standing in North Portland's Peninsula Park, recording footage of two teenage students as they interview a woman seated nearby.

The students are from the group, "Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere," a Multnomah County-wide effort, called [STRYVE](#) for short, that's trying to find ways to engage young people to veer away from violence and crime.

"My arm is killing me, man," says Myrick, who works as a county community health worker. He walks the three blocks from the park to Portland Community College's Cascade Campus where some STRYVE students convene twice a week to take a media class.

It's sweltering, but he's smiling because he likes what he does — working closely with youth who have had to bear the brunt of violence that's carried out across a number of the county's neighborhoods.

For three years, Myrick, 46, has helped make sure the county has its finger on the pulse of what's happening with kids as they struggle to become young adults. STRYVE is a national demonstration site, funded through the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to involve communities, build resiliency and protect against violence.

"He is the perfect person for the position that he has," says Lucinda Weems, a math teacher at Rosemary Anderson High School, one of the STRYVE sites ( She's known Myrick since he was 12 ). "Going to different facilities, teaching about this program. These are things that he already knew from growing up. He really cares about the youth. I think that's what gives him the push to do this. He's giving back to his community."

Myrick's upbringing was nothing like his life today. In fact, he has a better idea than most young people



about violence and a life of crime. It comes from his experience of skipping school and dealing drugs. He lived his early years under the familiar motto of those who peddle drugs: the more successful you are, the bigger target you become.

"We sit back now and laugh about the old times," says Myrick's best friend, Mike Fesser, who dealt with a similar upbringing. "Like, 'Man. That was crazy.' But it made us better men today."

Myrick's formative years began in Northeast Portland with a foster family. He remembers second grade when he attended Humboldt School until forced busing began to change the face of the city by integrating schools. Black students like Myrick were bused out of their neighborhoods to predominantly white schools while their white counterparts stayed put.





**DWIGHT MYRICK (RIGHT) WORKS ON A VIDEO WITH STRYVE INTERN MALIK FARRAKHAN. FARRAKHAN SAYS HE SEES MYRICK AS A ROLE MODEL. (PHOTO BY ELIZA KAMERLING-BROWN)**

When he talks about going to then-Robert Gray School in Southwest Portland, he recalls the 45-minute bus ride; the culture shock of going from a predominantly black school to a predominantly white school; and the way white students looked at him when lessons about slavery were taught.

"I'm in this classroom, and I'm the only black kid in the room," Myrick recalls. "I'm getting stared at, so I started getting into trouble. I was getting into trouble for any and everything. The majority of my classes: no black kids in there. Just me. I was kind of like, 'What am I doing here?'"

When asked how that felt, Myrick pauses. He ponders what to say about an experience that undoubtedly altered the

course of his life. After all, he was suspended on the first day of school and felt alienated because of the color of his skin, he says.

"I can honestly say the most damaging experience was going to Robert Gray," he responds. "Maybe if I would've went to Robert Gray with a bunch of peers from Humboldt, then I would've felt more comfortable...but going there, I just felt like I was the subject all the time. It just made me feel kind of removed."

He moved to Arkansas, where he spent his sixth grade year; back to Robert Gray for seventh grade; then he spent his final year of middle school as part of the inaugural class of then-Harriet Tubman School in North Portland. For high school, he went to Jefferson.

"I got to hanging around," he remembers. "I met some friends and we start skipping. Like, I'm talking about on



the daily. It was just ridiculous. I go from having As and Bs to Ds and Fs. I wasn't used to being in that kind of loose environment where you're a little more responsible for yourself with going to school."

By the end of his freshman year, he estimates he had earned only half of a credit – you need 24 to graduate from Portland Public Schools. He skipped class through his junior year and it became increasingly clear that he wouldn't graduate.

He transferred to Franklin High School in Southeast Portland, attending night school but still finishing a half-credit short. He got a General Education Diploma certificate instead.

After high school, during a stint at Clackamas Community College, Myrick found work with Neil Kelly, a remodeling company based in North Portland. One day, during a lunch break, he grabbed a plate of food at a house that was subsequently raided for drugs. It was a result of being in the wrong place at the wrong time, and Myrick spent 30 days in jail.

When Myrick got out, he had lost his financial aid and his job at Neil Kelly. He needed money.

"I got out, and I was like, 'Well, what am I going to do?'" he says. "I didn't want to go back to the house that I grew up in. Not because it was a bad place, but just because I wanted to stay out at night and hang out with my friends." And with no job and no money, drugs became the alternative.

"It was always around me, but I was never into that," he says now. "I would always say, 'I would never do that.' But at that point, we...just got into the drug trade."

Fesser ran the streets with him. They met when they were teenagers in the mid-1980s at church. If Fesser got in trouble, "( Myrick ) had my back," he says. "And I had his."

Myrick started selling drugs when he was 19. Fesser, who's two years younger, was with him every step of the way.

"It made us become the guys that we didn't really want to be," says Fesser. "We wanted to be 'those guys,' but people were scared of what we could have done. Money back then — money was power. We thought that we were above the law."

When many kids his age were in college, Myrick was living in multiple homes to stay on the move and night-time visits to clubs were frequent. The pinky on his right hand is missing, a result of him getting run over by a Lexus

outside of a club.

He recalls driving around Portland in fancy cars and using cash as a wedge to get attention. "Me and my friends, we used to get like a hundred dollars worth of ones," Myrick recalls. "Then we would just drive by the high school and we would just open the sunroof and let the ones just fly out...and all the girls would just be running and yelling."

Such displays made him a target — a recognized dealer who supplied a number of people in the community with drugs.

"It was just one thing after the next," he says. "People



**MYRICK (LEFT) WITH HIS GOOD FRIEND, MIKE FESSER. THEY MET AT CHURCH IN THE 1980s AND BOTH EVENTUALLY WOUND UP SERVING TIME IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR DRUG CRIMES BEFORE TURNING THEIR LIVES AROUND TO HELP OTHERS.**

( PHOTO COURTESY OF DWIGHT MYRICK )

were getting killed. I just got further and further into the drugs. It got to the point to where I felt like I wouldn't live to be 27. But the more I was around it, the more I started being immune to it."

Things started catching up to Myrick, especially when an investigation conducted by the FBI began on a group of people he worked with. Myrick was one of the last to be indicted. He remembers being approached in a dark room.



"It felt like a scene on the TV show," he says. He found himself in between the good cop and bad cop. They told him that he was staring at 30 years in prison for conspiracy.

"I think the biggest thing with the whole case was the idea of me against the United States of America," he says. "That's what it read on my indictment: 'Dwight Myrick vs. United States of America.' And I was just blown away by that."

Myrick pleaded guilty and received 57 months. He was sent to Sheridan Federal Correctional Institution in Oregon, where he served 36 months before being released on good behavior. Fesser got 48 months at the Lompoc, Calif., Federal Correctional Institution.

After prison, Myrick worked briefly towing cars, a job that one of his friends had set up for him coming out of prison. But it wasn't necessarily considered a long-term solution. He eventually found work with the city of Portland through a program that offered to pay for his college education and gave him training in inspection and plan-examining.

Myrick lasted almost two years before he was laid off through budget cuts. He tried a brief stint with a construction company, but it wasn't a good option for him.

He saw a job posting for STRYVE online and decided to apply. Rebecca Stavenjord, the STRYVE coordinator at the time, says more than 130 applications came in for the job and 13 people made it to the final interviews. Myrick's interview stood out above the rest and he got the job.

"He grapples with these very complex problems and he always thinks very positively and constructively about things," Stavenjord says. "I think that that is a wonderful and unique quality that anyone looks for in an employee. We really lucked out when we hired him."

Now, he's someone who regularly interacts with youth in the community. He spends most of his time visiting STRYVE sites around the county, whether that be Rosemary Anderson High School, Matt Dishman Community Center or Home Forward's New Columbia neighborhood.

"He's trying to give back to the community that he destroyed," says Fesser. "That he was involved with destroying, I should say. He still has that 100 percent effort and attitude. If he's going to do something, he's going to put his all into it."

Part of Myrick's job is at his office, where he files paperwork, organizes events and looks for funding for youth programs. But a lot of his work is actually connecting with kids. On typical days, he can be found hovering around neighborhoods in North Portland, visiting with teenagers in the area, assisting them with projects they're working on and collaborating with co-workers to create a positive environment.

Fesser runs M & R Auto Sales on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Morgan Street. He's far removed from the drug trade chapter of his life, holding down two jobs and going to prisons twice a week to speak to inmates about life choices.

Some 20 years later, he remains best friends with Myrick, who says he's not into handing out lectures to the youth he serves. "I'm not so much into 'stop gangbangin',' or 'stop doing this,' or 'stop doing that,'" says Myrick. "My goal is to have more opportunities of stuff they can do that's positive. You have other choices to do this, to do that.

"If you wanna have that conversation, we can have that conversation. And then another thing that I bring to the table is from going through all that stuff, and being in the streets like that, there's not one person that I would be afraid to sit down in front of and talk about the stuff that they may be

doing that is damaging to the community."

"He was the one who got me involved with STRYVE," says Malik Farrakhan, who was part of the inaugural STRYVE class. "He got me involved in pretty much everything that I've done — like work-wise, social-wise — I wouldn't have done that if I hadn't gotten involved with Dwight.

"If I hadn't met Dwight, none of this would be a thing. Taking this journey with these guys... it's changed my life. I know if I ever needed anything, I could call Dwight and he would try to help."

Even if he wasn't working for the county, Myrick says, he would be volunteering with youth. It's something that he naturally gravitates toward, something at which he excels. His dream job, something he's

done on the side in the past, is to become a real estate investor, but he still genuinely feels that no matter what job he holds, youth will be involved in his life.

"As far as street résumés go, mine just stands out probably a lot better than some of the people that are doing stuff now," says Myrick. "So it's not like somebody that never got in trouble is preaching this. It's actually somebody that's fortunate enough to make it out of that lifestyle. And so a lot of times, it's just an automatic connection with the youth. Because sometimes, they just wanna talk."

•

For more information about Multnomah County's STRYVE program, go to [stryvepdx.wix.com/stryvepdx](http://stryvepdx.wix.com/stryvepdx) or call 503-927-1823.

"He really cares about the youth. I think that's what gives him the push to do this. He's giving back to his community."

• LUCINDA WEEMS,  
A TEACHER WHO HAS  
KNOWN DWIGHT MYRICK  
SINCE HE WAS 12

# Answering the age-old question:

## What's the difference between Multnomah County and the City of Portland?

By **Andrea Coghlan**  
*Multco Communications Office*

So just what is Multnomah County government?

Several months ago, a group of county representatives traveled to east Portland to visit with residents from the Slavic community.

After a brief round of introductions, the conversation moved to how community members could be helped by county services. The questions and comments came in at rapid-fire pace.

"How can we get our sidewalks fixed?" one man asked. "We need to make sure our schools have enough good teachers," a woman chimed in.

Someone else wanted to know: "Is there a way we can get more police in our neighborhood?"

County Chair Deborah Kafoury, who attended the meeting, remembers the reaction. It's something, she says, that she's seen for some time in local government. "People don't necessarily know exactly what the county does or what the city of Portland does," she says. "What they know is that they have a need for services and they are turning to us for help. It doesn't matter who is responsible. We should be able to provide clear direction in order to connect people."

It's a vexing issue Multnomah County officials have faced for decades, with most residents thinking the city of Portland government handles much of the civic chores in the area. To complicate the issue further, the county is home to five other cities – Gresham, Troutdale, Maywood Park, Fairview and Wood Village.

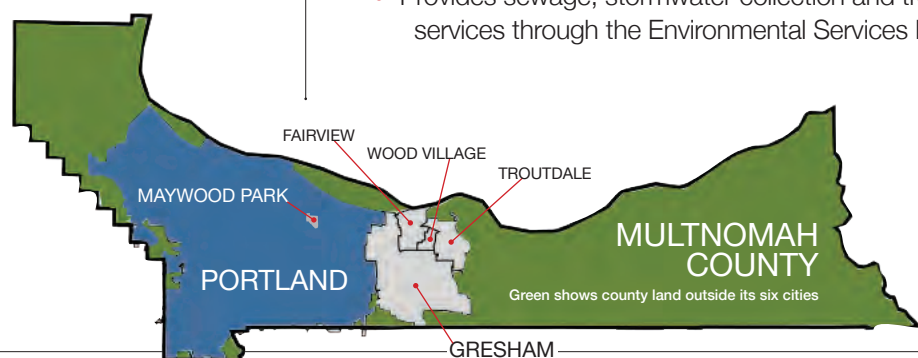
To help demystify who does what, we've created this handy guide to [Multnomah County](#) and [city of Portland](#) functions:

### Multnomah County

- Operates the mental health crisis system, providing a network of support for community members experiencing mental illness or addiction.
  - Provides public safety services to unincorporated areas of the county, as well as forested watersheds and waterways.
  - Investigates and responds to disease outbreaks and public health emergencies, and operates 33 primary care clinics and speciality health centers throughout the county.
  - Operates the Burnside, Broadway, Hawthorne, Sauvie Island, Sellwood and Morrison bridges, as well as 21 smaller bridges scattered throughout the county.
- Issues marriage licenses, takes passport photos and submits passport applications to the federal government.
- Operates the Gresham and downtown Portland courthouses, all adult and juvenile jails, and supervises adults and juveniles on parole or probation.
- Runs 19 library branches.
- Conducts all local, city, county, state and federal elections for the citizens of the county.
- Collects property taxes for dozens of different taxing districts within the county.
- Provides animal services, including pet licensing, animal rescue and adoptions.

### City of Portland

- Operates and oversees the Portland Police Bureau.
- Maintains Portland parks, natural areas and public areas of the city.
- Provides response to fire, medical and other emergencies with Portland Fire & Rescue.
  - Plans, builds and manages the city's transportation system, including streets, traffic signals and street lights under the Bureau of Transportation.
- Manages and protects the city's water quality and water delivery system.
- Regulates garbage, recycling and composting as part of the city's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability.
  - Provides sewage, stormwater collection and treatment services through the Environmental Services Bureau.





RIGHT • THE MULTNOMAH COUNTY SHERIFF'S RESERVE MOTORCYCLE STUNT TEAM USED TO PERFORM TRICKS FOR AUDIENCES FOR ENTERTAINMENT.

BELOW • AN OFFICER ABOARD A MOTORCYCLE LEAPS THROUGH A FLAMING HOOP. THE STUNT TEAM FOLDED IN THE 1960s BECAUSE OF A LACK OF FUNDING.  
( PHOTOS COURTESY OF MULTNOMAH COUNTY ARCHIVES )



## MultCo TIME Capsule

Law enforcement wasn't the only thing the Sheriff's Office did in the old days...

By Andrea Coghlan  
*Multco Communications Office*

It's no secret that the men and women of the [Multnomah County Sheriff's Office](#) have to be courageous in their line of work. From law enforcement, to search and rescue operations, to patrolling the rivers to operating the jails, these officers in green have been staring danger in the face since 1854.

But did you know that for a time, some sheriff's deputies performed daring feats just to thrill the very same public they were protecting?



Starting in 1933, the Multnomah County Sheriff's Reserve Motorcycle Stunt Team performed risky acts, including "broad jumps." That's where one motorcycle-riding officer would attempt to clear as many of his team members as possible as they lay face down on the ground.

There was also the "burning boardwall crash," where a member of the stunt team would ride his motorcycle through a large wall of flames at speeds of 50 miles per hour.

The team even stunned crowds outside of Multnomah County, taking the act on the road to Vancouver, B.C., and Mexico City, until the show ultimately came to a close in the 1960s due to lack of funding.







FORMERLY HOMELESS VET JOHN ENGLISH NOW PERFORMS AS A FRANK SINATRA ENTERTAINER, HERE, AT PORTLAND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. (PHOTOS BY RANDY COX)

# Makin





## HOUSING THOSE WHO SERVED

By Jessica Morkert-Shibley  
*Multco Communications Office*

### Just beyond the TSA security lines at Portland International Airport,

past the shuffling of luggage and the clamor of hurried passengers, a crowd pauses at a small, circular lounge. A sleek man turns toward them, his trim form dressed in a tuxedo — classic Hollywood black and white. With a vintage mic in hand and a grand piano at his back, he gracefully saunters and sings the familiar tunes of Frank Sinatra.

John English is a Sinatra tribute artist whose baritone voice has earned him performances on stages across the country. He's performed at Portland lounges, weddings, the Space Needle in Seattle, the Golden Nugget Casino in Reno, clubs in Las Vegas, Palm Springs and much more.

Few of the smiling passengers could imagine that just a year before, the suave entertainer, father and U.S. veteran fell so far behind on rent and resources that he lost his housing.

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**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**

HOW AN EFFORT TO END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS  
HELPED PULL JOHN ENGLISH BACK FROM THE BRINK

# ng it home

Today, as Multnomah County campaigns to house all homeless veterans, the 60-year-old English stands as an example of how a daring community partnership is tackling the housing crisis, honoring national service and transforming lives.

"I don't think most people think, 'I'm going to be homeless,' or are in a big transitional moment where 'I'm not sure where I'm going to be living,'" says English.

•

**Multnomah County is working with the city of Portland,** Home Forward and dozens of community partners to make sure that every veteran has a home. Since January, 450 homeless veterans have been housed. But as of September, another 240 were still looking for permanent housing. Chair Deborah Kafoury and her partners on "[A Home for Every Veteran](#)" have made ending veteran homelessness the leading edge of their efforts.

"[A Home for Everyone](#)" is the partnership Multnomah County formed with the cities of Portland and Gresham, Home Forward, Meyer Memorial Trust and several other community partners who've devoted time and resources to end homelessness. Its project, A Home for Every Veteran partners with the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Housing and Urban Development to end veteran homelessness.

John English's unexpected descent into homelessness is one that many veterans throughout Multnomah County experience, including many who are forced to live on the streets.

At 18, English was a bright-eyed high school graduate in California eager to serve his country. He enlisted in the Marines in 1974 and was eventually stationed in Okinawa, Japan, where he served as a radio operator for five years. During his active duty, his ability to sing like Sinatra earned him special performances for the United Service Organizations.

"I wanted to serve my country and do something positive," says English. "It was a chance to learn a skill and learn a lot about the management and leadership skills that go along with it. But I still wanted to go into music."

He was honorably discharged and in 1980, after a brief stint in advertising, English pursued his dream as a Sinatra tribute artist in Oregon. He found work, met his wife and had a son.

"I was married and we got divorced and I basically took on the role of raising my son on my own," he says. "He has Down syndrome and is nonverbal, so we both use sign language to communicate."

As a single, self-employed father, English managed to make ends meet by relying on friends and community

resources to get by. But last year, he fell on unusually tough times.

English couldn't afford to pay rent. He and his son did not have a permanent home.

"I don't think anyone imagines that in five years I'm going to be sitting in a hotel wondering where I'm going," he says.

•

**The A Home for Every Veteran project** is dedicated to serving veterans just like English.

"We have unprecedented resources and dozens of agencies working to support this effort, including financial resources and a team of workers that are there to help landlords who are willing to prioritize housing veterans," says A Home for Everyone Initiative Director Marc Jolin. "Our biggest challenge is finding units for veterans."

The expensive, low-vacancy, high-demand rental market has presented more than its share of challenges in a bold plan to house the county's homeless vets by the end of this year.

In September, A Home for Every Veteran launched its 100-day push to end veteran homelessness by Dec. 31, 2015. In doing so, the Portland-area partners hope to join other U.S. cities that have successfully housed veterans as part of a nationwide priority established by the White House in 2009. To further advance the work, First Lady Michelle Obama launched the Mayor's Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness in June 2014, engaging countless public officials across the nation.

Ending veteran homelessness does not mean that no veteran will ever experience homelessness. It means that A Home for Every Veteran will do everything it can to help prevent veterans from losing their housing, and if a veteran becomes homeless, resources are in place to quickly identify them and get them back into a home.

"New Orleans, Houston, Salt Lake City and Phoenix have done it," says Chair Kafoury. "Multnomah County and Portland can and should be on that list. We have 690 veterans to house in Portland and Multnomah County and we are more than halfway to our goal. But we just need that final piece of the puzzle."

Chair Kafoury looks for willing landlords in every public gathering. She says: "If you have a unit, if you have three or five units — please consider those who have served our country and are now in need."

Jolin says he asks potential landlords to look beyond the usual credit checks and sometimes difficult history, and to see where the veteran is headed now, what the veteran is bringing, and importantly, what are the support services the veteran has available.

"Although a veteran's rental background check may show some things that would normally make





**JOHN ENGLISH (ABOVE) GETS TOURIST BOB LYNN INVOLVED IN HIS ACT DURING A RECENT PERFORMANCE AT A LOCAL HOTEL. (BELOW) ENGLISH HAS BUSINESS CARDS WITH HIS PHOTOGRAPH ON THEM THAT LOOK LIKE PLAYING CARDS. HIS NICKNAME? "THE VOICE."**

a landlord nervous, in this case the veteran has the commitment and support services from the community to help them be a successful tenant – services that other applicants don't have. And if for some reason the tenancy isn't working out, there are easy-to-access resources to help the landlord cover the costs related to ending the tenancy."

**For John English, the final piece of the puzzle** was a benevolent landlord willing to look past some of his challenges and give him a shot at a vacant rental.

While staying in temporary housing provided through Northwest Pilot Project, English was able to obtain a long-term rental assistance voucher through the VA and HUD.

"When I came out to meet with Tom, the landlord here, we basically shared with him my story and it came with

me wearing a suit," English recalls. "When you put your best foot forward and you start to talk to some of these people, they look at you as being sincere and this person

cares about where he is going to live."

English has a two-bedroom, spacious apartment he shares with his son. And he wants everyone to know that other veterans still need help.

"I think the ones that are out there, if they're homeless or in a shelter or staying with somebody — finding permanent housing is not just a dream, it's a reality and you can make that a reality by tapping into the resources."



**If you are a landlord or property owner interested in helping, please send an email to [mary.carroll@multco.us](mailto:mary.carroll@multco.us) or call 503-988-6796. If you see a homeless veteran or know a veteran who is in need, please encourage them to call 2-1-1.**

# The county worker: Eric Ensley

By **Andrea Coghlan**

*Multco Communications Office*

Eric Ensley comes from a long line of military service.

His uncle, his nephew and 15 of his cousins have all served in the U.S. Navy. Even his great grandfather served in the United States Army Air Corps or as we call it today, the United States Air Force.

At age 18, Ensley remembers being at his first duty station in the Navy in Norfolk, Virginia. His uncle Leon, who served as a swiftboat chief engineer during Vietnam, lived just a stone's throw away in Virginia Beach.

"I would spend my nights and weekends at his house," recalls Ensley, who bonded with his uncle over naval traditions and camaraderie. "We would talk nothing but the Navy every time I would go over there. To the point where my aunt was like, 'Aren't you guys gonna ever talk about anything else?'"

Ensley served in the Navy from 1985 to 1993. During his active service, he was deployed in the Persian Gulf in support of operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

For the last year, he's served as program supervisor at [Multnomah County's Veterans' Services Office](#). He oversees the program that provides benefits information, help and advocacy to veterans and their families living in Multnomah County.

As the community is working to house homeless veterans through the "A Home for Every Veteran" initiative, Ensley says he and his staff are trying to connect people to benefits they are entitled to because of their military service.

"We help them navigate what may be a complex system at times," says Ensley, adding that he hears people say the federal Veterans Affairs office contributes to some of the issues vets face. "Our office works to dispel a lot of that," he says.

When veterans come to Multnomah County looking for help, they find it in the form of service officers. "Service officers have served in the military or have family members who served," says Ensley, 48. "So there's a connection that's made. There's camaraderie."

The help with benefits includes medical coverage,

education, vocational rehabilitation, disability compensation, burial benefits, non-service-connected pensions, death pensions for survivors of wartime veterans and more.

Ensley's office also looks at the possibility of discharge upgrades and the correction of military records. For example, when a veteran comes in with an uncharacterized discharge, caseworkers look at the veteran's overall service record.



**ERIC ENSLEY SERVES AS A PROGRAM SUPERVISOR IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY'S VETERANS' SERVICES OFFICE.**

(PHOTOS BY RANDY COX)

The goal? To help veterans get a characterization determination from the VA and ultimately all the benefits they are seeking. "But for that to happen, we need them to come in and have a discussion," explains Ensley.

He says the same thing to his own family. Recently, a cousin's husband who was a Marine and living in North Carolina had a hard time claiming all his benefits from the VA.

"He had some economic disparities he was faced with," Ensley recalls. "He had some health issues he was faced with and he talked to me."

Ensley helped the relative navigate the system and all the forms he needed to fill out. Today, he's getting what he deserves. "He's at 100 percent," Ensley says.



# The landlord: Joni Jones

By Kate Willson

Multco Communications Office

Joni Jones understands why landlords hesitate to rent to a homeless veteran. The rental market is hot.

A landlord can set a high price, pick through applications for someone with steady work, a seemingly happy family, no pets, a tidy house, good credit and glowing references.

“A lot of management companies have waiting lists of people willing to pay more than the regular rent,” says Jones, who owns seven rental housing units. “Rather than taking the time and effort to work with someone, they have so many other easier options.”

But when one of Jones’ units became available last spring, she called “A Home for Every Veteran.” By July, U.S. Navy veteran Mark Giles moved in.

Jones’ son Nick served in the Navy. Today, he’s a welder with a family to support. He says sometimes he feels like he’s just a paycheck away from living on the street, so it’s easy to see himself in Giles’ place. And that makes him especially proud of his mom.

Joni Jones says she’s “paying it forward.” She would hope that if her boy fell on hard times, someone would extend a hand. “It’s partly because my son is a vet and partly because I love my country,” she says.

“Sometimes, you have to give a person a chance.”

Make no mistake, Jones isn’t naive. At age 70, after 27 years as a landlord, she’s been burned a few times. One tenant tore the place apart then disappeared, leaving behind \$82,000 in damages to one of her units.

Then there was a pastor “whose name will go unmentioned,” she says. He was so terrible that if she had her way, the man would never rent in Oregon again. Her best tenant has been a recovering drug addict.

“There’s always a risk whoever you get,” she says. Sometimes those promises of tidy housekeeping are broken. Or the extended family moves in. Or that once-happy couple files for divorce.

“Maybe you find out the guy with the great job, he quit, or he had an accident and couldn’t work, or he got cancer,” she says.

But with homeless veterans, she says, “you already know

all the bad stuff. Nope, he doesn’t have employment. Nope, he doesn’t have a rental history.”

That’s why she feels safe going through the “A Home for Every Veteran” program. It assigns each tenant a caseworker, guarantees the rent and even covers damages. Plus, there’s a 24-hour support hotline she can call.

“The people who are working on this are dedicated,” she says. “They give me the support to help a homeless person. And the icing on the cake is that it’s a vet.”



**JONI JONES OWNS SEVEN UNITS OF RENTAL HOUSING IN EAST MULTNOMAH COUNTY. SHE WANTS OTHER LANDLORDS TO CONSIDER RENTING TO VETERANS WHO NEED HELP.**

Lio Alaalatoa works for JOIN, a social service agency that helps homeless people. He was assigned to work with Jones and her tenant, and handles more than 100 landlords all over the county. He’s particularly fond of Jones.

“She’s straightforward,” he says. “If she doesn’t like something, she’ll tell you. If everyone was like that, work would be much easier.”

If another unit opens up, Jones says she’ll offer that one to a homeless veteran, too. She says she’s not about to stop reaching out and taking a little risk.

“Maybe when I’m 90,” she says, then pauses. “But probably not.”

# Homeless in his 70s: William Hudson

By Jessica Rivera

Multco Communications Office

In December 2014, U.S. Army veteran William Hudson left his North Portland apartment to handle a family emergency in California. By the time he moved back a month later, his subsidized apartment was leased to someone else.

Desperate, Hudson started sleeping in his 1999 Toyota Camry. As he looked for a new apartment he could afford, the days turned to weeks and then months.

At age 79, Hudson was homeless.

“Sleeping in a car is not comfortable,” he says. “You’re always worried about somebody hurting you. Your safety is at stake. You have to worry about finding some place to wash up and try to find somewhere to eat. Luckily, downtown Portland has soup kitchens.”

Hudson joined the military in 1955 and served three years in Germany, still torn apart after World War II.

He was sent to Munich, where fleeing Hungarians sought refuge after the uprising of 1956. Hudson helped set up tents, provided food and processed Hungarians immigrating to the United States.

After his tour, he was re-assigned near Seoul, South Korea, where he served as a communication specialist for the Army Signal Corps. He helped teach locals how to operate electro-mechanical typewriters and radios.

In 1961, he was honorably discharged and moved back to the U.S. and settled in Los Angeles. He landed a job as a city transit driver.

In the 1990s, he relocated to Portland for a quieter, less expensive lifestyle. He would continue picking up work until retiring in December 2014. His last month of work marked the beginning of his crisis, resulting in the loss of his subsidized housing.

In March 2015, after nearly three months on the streets, the veteran went to see his former caseworker Elizabeth DeNiro-Wallace from Northwest Pilot Project.

The nonprofit organization helps seniors in Multnomah County with housing and transportation. Hudson qualified

for assistance from a Support Services for Veteran Families grant that’s handled by a partnership between Northwest Pilot Project and Transition Projects, Inc.

The grant covered his application fees, deposit, rent and other expenses.

“Sometimes life throws you curves,” says Hudson. “But I also wouldn’t have known about all the resources available for



**WILLIAM HUDSON KNOWS WHAT IT’S LIKE TO BE HOMELESS. AFTER RUNNING INTO A FAMILY CRISIS, HE FOUND HIMSELF SLEEPING IN HIS CAR. TODAY, AT 79, HE HAS A PLACE TO STAY.**

veterans. I’m the kind of guy that if you give me a little nudge, I can go.”

By June, with assistance from community partners dedicated to the “A Home for Everyone” project, Hudson was able to get off the streets and find a place to call his own.

Caseworker DeNiro-Wallace says: “I would say right now, if someone is a veteran, now more than ever there are a lot of resources. There’s a lot more hope.”

Hudson agrees. “No one needs to be homeless or hungry,” he says. “Persevere, keep going, keep looking, stay active and stay in contact with the VA programs because there are a lot of them out there. Talk to people and find out what’s available for you.”



# How you can help with the effort to end homelessness

1. Volunteer at a nonprofit that focuses on homelessness, domestic violence, poverty or affordable housing. Visit Hands On Greater Portland at [handsonportland.org](http://handsonportland.org) to find volunteer opportunities.

2. Donate or collect food, clothes and supplies for local organizations serving the needs of the homeless and near homeless. For a list of organizations, visit [211info.org](http://211info.org) or [rosecityresource.org](http://rosecityresource.org). You can also search for highly-rated nonprofits working on homelessness in our community at [guidestar.org](http://guidestar.org).

3. Call your local school district and speak to the homeless coordinator, and ask how you can help:

- Centennial School District:  
503-762-3632
- David Douglas School District:  
503-261-8238
- Gresham Barlow School District:  
503-261-4579
- Parkrose School District:  
503-408-2692
- Portland Public Schools:  
503-916-5770
- Reynolds School District:  
503-661-7200, Ext. 3591

4. Donate money to organizations serving the homeless and near homeless. The money helps sustain housing, programming and staff. For a list of organizations, visit [211info.org](http://211info.org) or [rosecityresource.org](http://rosecityresource.org). You can also search nonprofits working on homelessness in our community at [guidestar.org](http://guidestar.org).

5. Contact homeless service providers and ask how you can help. Volunteer to serve on a board of directors, a community outreach committee or offer your expertise.

6. Get to know a homeless person. Meet with them and see what support you can lend them one-on-one as you work with individual agencies.

7. Think about developing your own fundraising strategy to support a particular agency.

8. Write letters to local newspaper editors. Connect with local, regional, state and national politicians who represent you about the need to help people experiencing homelessness.



“A Home for Every Veteran” is a community-wide initiative to house all homeless veterans in **Multnomah County**. The project is a piece of “A Home for Everyone,” a joint effort by the county, the private sector, nonprofits and other local governments to bring attention to the plight of those who need housing.

Veterans have long represented a sizable chunk of the homeless here. This movement is trying to spark awareness about the issue and find landlords willing to rent to veterans who have run into problems finding a place to live.

As part of the effort, local officials partnered with **KGW Media Group** to create a public service announcement that features **Anna Tway** (above) and **Bill Clark** (below) — two veterans who have experienced homelessness but were helped under the program.

Go to [ahomeforeveryvet.net](http://ahomeforeveryvet.net) to see the PSA.

(PHOTOS BY RANDY COX)



9. Talk to members of the faith-based community about ways to get involved through volunteering, financial commitment or spiritual support.

10. Grant dignity and respect to everyone, knowing that there is a need all around and you have the ability to make a difference.

Source: This information is adapted from a list created by InvisiblePeople.tv, <http://InvisiblePeople.tv>, Samaritan Community Center, <http://www.SAMCC.org>, and the Northwest Arkansas Women’s Shelter, <http://www.nwaws.org/>.

By Mike Pullen

Multco Communications Office

**Roy Iwai has always had a soft spot for fish.** Growing up in Southern California, he didn't live near the ocean. But Iwai remembers a field trip to a marine biology lab in the third grade that was a sign of things to come. "They took us out to the lab at Dana Point," he says. "I remember seeing specimens of ocean fish. They let us dissect the fish and look at them under a microscope. It was one of my first experiences with the natural world."

After moving to Portland, Iwai took some of his first hikes on Mount Hood. He learned to fly fish and became interested in the health of mountain streams. His interest in fish led him to study water quality.

Today, Iwai, 46, is [Multnomah County's water resources specialist](#). By helping the county manage the stormwater that comes off its roads and bridges, the program helps reduce pollution in local streams and rivers – which is good for fish and county residents.

We sat down with Iwai to ask about some of the most surprising things that are living in the county's waterways – and what signs of hope he sees for our environment.

#### **How do county roads impact our streams?**

In the construction and maintenance of roads, there are erosion concerns, concerns about the volume of stormwater and the treatment of stormwater...In Multnomah County, we have salmon species that are listed under the Endangered Species Act. Some of these fish in different life stages are more sensitive to different contaminants. Copper, for example, can disorient fish and may cause them to go into seizures and result in pre-spawn mortality. Things that come from cars, off the pavement and as runoff from land, such as pesticides, those things run off from the street into our drainage system and get discharged into the stream.

#### **What does the county have to do with water quality?**

When we build roads, inevitably we have to cross streams. We have to have a way to discharge the stormwater that drains from that pavement. In most cases, we have a drainage system that collects the water in gutters and catch basins and goes down a pipe to a stream.

#### **Which rivers and streams does your work focus on?**

In the county, we have a lot of fish-bearing streams. The big ones that get the most attention are tributaries of the Tualatin, Willamette, Sandy and Columbia rivers. Local streams like Johnson Creek, Beaver Creek, Fanno Creek and Rock Creek also get a lot of attention.

# For the love of fish

•  
An interview  
with water  
resources  
specialist  
Roy Iwai

ROY IWAI (ABOVE) IN KELLY CREEK NEAR MOUNT HOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE. THE CREEK IS ONE OF MANY IN THE URBAN AREA THAT IS HOME TO A SURPRISING DIVERSITY OF FISH AND OTHER SPECIES.

(PHOTO BY RANDY COX)

#### **What's it like to deal with water quality in such an urban area?**

The interesting thing about this job is that it's really an experiment about how we are learning to live with the natural environment in a way that sustains the stream and sustains us. We love to have the urban wildlife and the stream experience; it helps soothe us in the city. We're trying to figure out how to make that balance...For many years, we didn't





really understand the impacts we were making ( in the natural world ). The impacts have grown as the cities have grown. At this point, the county owns hundreds of road culverts that are fish-passage barriers.

**What would you like people to know about the water quality of local rivers and streams?**

The Clean Water Act tells us that a stream should be swimmable and fishable. So, is it healthy for us to recreate in the stream? Often, local streams are OK to swim in at certain times of the year, but not at other times due to bacteria. If we think about it for the fish, oftentimes the water quality here is good for them, except when we have high stormwater runoff

or seasonally high temperatures.

**What are people most surprised to learn about water quality in our local waterways?**

Just the fact that the fish are present is a surprise. It was really a surprise to me to look at a stream and think, 'How could that small stream possibly support any life and be worthy of our attention?' But oftentimes, some of these small streams are spring-fed and the water quality might be really good. And they may have dozens of Pacific giant salamanders or

•  
**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**



cutthroat trout. Overall, we have 16 species of native fish in our little streams.

**What is the most interesting thing you get to do at work?**

Of course, it's cool to do field work and hang out in the stream. But for me the most exciting thing is to build the relationships with our partners. Every watershed has multiple jurisdictions, different cities and counties that have little portions of the watershed. Getting these folks together in a room to coordinate and discuss our restoration objectives and implement them in a coordinated way — like monitoring stream temperature data throughout a watershed — you can only do that in a coordinated way. You can't manage a stream without considering the whole watershed.

**With climate change and other challenges, it's easy to get discouraged about the health of the environment. What encouraging things do you see in your work?**

We are living in a time when we've damaged the ecosystems for over 100 years. We have maybe 100 years to go to restore these streams. To know that the fish and the fish-eating birds and amphibians are still there, even though we've put that much pressure on these ecosystems is amazing to me. We're moving toward a trajectory that is more sustainable.

**How did you get interested in this work?**

I started out loving fish as a kid. That led to me becoming a sushi chef. Then I veered off into the science realm and fell in love with the chemistry of water and the soil, and ended up getting a master's degree in wetland biogeochemistry. That's the study of how nutrients and chemicals cycle through the soil and water of flooded environments and plants. Ultimately, it really did come from a love of fish.

**What is important to succeed in your work?**

You need to have a technical background, know the science and continue to read up. The other part is the people part. If you're a people person, that's a skill set that helps you bring people along and work together. That is



**IWAI HOLDS A NATIVE CUTTHROAT TROUT FOUND IN UPPER JOHNSON CREEK. THE COUNTY'S WATER QUALITY PROGRAM INCLUDES SURVEYS TO DETERMINE WHICH SPECIES LIVE IN LOCAL STREAMS. THIS FISH WAS TEMPORARILY STUNNED SO IT COULD BE MEASURED, THEN RETURNED TO JOHNSON CREEK. (PHOTO COURTESY OF ROY IWAI)**

probably my biggest skill, something that I love to do.

**Do you spend any free time on the water and what places do you like the best?**

I spent a good portion of my 20s flyfishing in the headwater streams and high lakes in the Cascades. I love being out around estuaries where the river meets the ocean. You have different plant, fish and bird species that inhabit that edge environment.

**What's the most surprising thing you've seen in your work?**

The surprise is when I see the reactions on people's faces when I tell them there are fish in their local stream. I was doing a fish survey and had a backpack electro fisher that stuns the fish for a minute so you can count them. The neighbors would ask, "What are you doing? There's nothing in that stream." Then I'd zap the water and up come these juvenile coho salmon that were in the neighbors' backyard. The reaction on the neighbors' faces was just total delight.

That was one of the greatest surprises for me.

GO TO: [multco.us/magazine-videos](http://multco.us/magazine-videos)  
TO SEE A VIDEO PRODUCED  
BY MARK BAKER ABOUT ROY IWAI



# How to contact us at Multnomah County

Multnomah County serves about 766,135 residents by providing physical and mental health care, public safety, libraries, transportation and a variety of other services.

For general information, call 503-823-4000 or visit [multco.us](http://multco.us) online for access to services. The following is a guide you can use to reach us.

## COMMUNITY JUSTICE

- Adult Services  
Call 503-988-3701 or visit [multco.us/dcj-adult](http://multco.us/dcj-adult)
- Family Court Services  
Call 503-988-3189 or visit [multco.us/dcj/fcs](http://multco.us/dcj/fcs)
- Juvenile Services  
Call 503-988-3460 or visit [multco.us/dcj-juvenile](http://multco.us/dcj-juvenile)

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

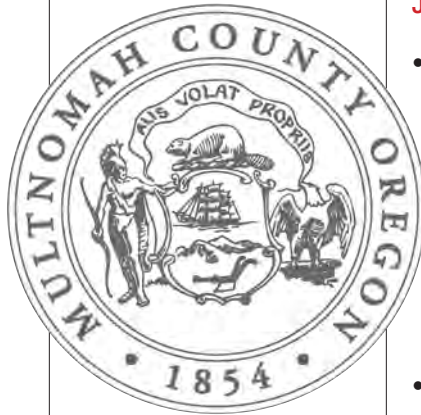
- Animal Services  
Call 503-988-7387 or visit [multcopets.org](http://multcopets.org)
- Bridges  
Call 503-988-3757 or visit [multco.us/bridge-services](http://multco.us/bridge-services)
- Elections  
Call 503-988-3720 or visit [multco.us/elections](http://multco.us/elections)
- Land Use Planning  
Call 503-988-3043 or visit [multco.us/landuse](http://multco.us/landuse)
- Transportation  
Call 503-988-5050 or visit [multco.us/transportation\\_planning](http://multco.us/transportation_planning)

## COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES

- Aging and Disabilities Services Division  
Call 503-988-3620 or visit [multco.us/ads/](http://multco.us/ads/)
- Aging and Disability Services Helpline  
Call 503-988-3646

## DIVISION OF ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING AND TAXATION

- Marriage License  
Call 503-988-3326 x4
- Passports  
Call 503-988-3326 x6



- Property Tax Information  
Call 503-988-3326 x3
- Public Records Office  
Call 503-988-3326 x5

## HEALTH SERVICES

- Dental Access Program  
Call 503-988-6942 or visit [multco.us/health/dental-clinics](http://multco.us/health/dental-clinics)
- Food Handlers  
Call 503-988-5257
- Mental Health Crisis Intervention  
Call 503-988-4888
- Oregon AIDS/ STD Hotline  
Call 503-223-2437
- Primary Care Clinics  
Call 503-988-5558 or visit [multco.us/health/primary-care-clinics](http://multco.us/health/primary-care-clinics)

- Restaurant Inspections  
Call 503-988-3400
- Vector Nuisance Control  
Call 503-988-3464 or visit [mchealth.org/vector](http://mchealth.org/vector)
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC)  
Call 503-988-3503 or visit [multco.us/health/wic](http://multco.us/health/wic)

## LIBRARY

- Library Services  
Call 503-988-5402 or visit [multcolib.org](http://multcolib.org)
- Library Reference line  
503.988.4234

## MULTNOMAH COUNTY JOB OPPORTUNITIES

- Call 503-988-5035 or visit [multco.us/jobs](http://multco.us/jobs)

## PUBLIC SAFETY

- Child Abuse Hotline  
Call 503-731-3100
- Domestic Violence  
Call 503-823-0090
- District Attorney  
Call 503-988-3162 or visit [mcda.us](http://mcda.us)
- Justice Center  
Call 503-988-3689
- Portland Women's Crisis Line  
Call 503-235-5333
- Sheriff's Office  
Call 503-988-4300 or visit [mcso.us](http://mcso.us)
- Victim Assistance  
Call 503-988-3222

## EMERGENCY & UTILITIES ASSISTANCE

- Call 211 or 503-222-5555
- County Jobs Hotline  
503.988.5035



## Elected Officials

**Chair**  
**Deborah Kafoury**  
503- 988-3308  
[mult.chair@multco.us](mailto:mult.chair@multco.us)



**District 1 Commissioner**  
**Jules Bailey**  
503.988.5220  
[district1@multco.us](mailto:district1@multco.us)



**District 2 Commissioner**  
**Loretta Smith**  
503.988.5219  
[district2@multco.us](mailto:district2@multco.us)



**District 3 Commissioner**  
**Judy Shiprack**  
503.988.5217  
[district3@multco.us](mailto:district3@multco.us)



**District 4 Commissioner**  
**Diane McKeel**  
503.988.5213  
[district4@multco.us](mailto:district4@multco.us)



**Auditor**  
**Steve March**  
503.988.3320  
[mult.auditor@multco.us](mailto:mult.auditor@multco.us)



**District Attorney**  
**Rod Underhill**  
503.988.3162  
[da@mcda.us](mailto:da@mcda.us)



**Sheriff Dan Staton**  
503.988.4300  
[webmaster@mcso.us](mailto:webmaster@mcso.us)

# Did you know?



## Multnomah County Animal Services opens its second location

For more than 40 years, Troutdale, Ore., has been the only place Multnomah County Animal Services has called home. That's meant most pet-loving residents who visited the animal shelter's suburban location faced quite a trek to potentially adopt an animal or find a missing pet.

That's why the county opened up a new satellite location at 2914 N. Lombard St. in Portland. Now, adopting furry family members is easier than ever — regardless of where you live in Multnomah County.

At the moment, only cats and kittens are available for

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MULTNOMAH COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES, GO TO [MULTCOPETS.ORG](http://MULTCOPETS.ORG)

adoption at the new Lombard location, but once you're there you can also license your pet.

Visitors can also browse the adoption kiosk for pets available at the Troutdale location that can be quickly transferred to and picked up from the Lombard Street site.

The new facility is open Fridays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and weekends from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. [Visit multcopets.org](http://multcopets.org) for more information.

• Andrea Coghlan



(PHOTOS BY RANDY COX)