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## Big-box developer drops site

Wednesday, February 06, 2008

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- it is excellent by gusgirl

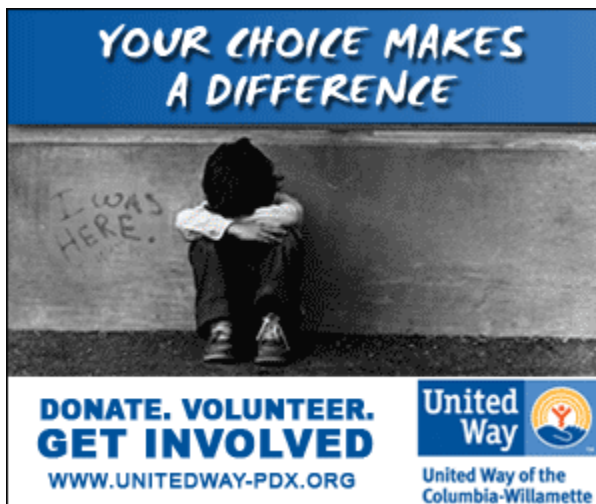
touted as an eastside Wal-Mart A Canadian developer has pulled out of a proposed big-box development on Northeast 82nd Avenue kitty-corner to Madison High School after bitter opposition from neighborhood groups that feared construction of a Wal-Mart.

SmartCentres, a shopping center developer, allowed its 3-year-old purchase-and-sale agreement for the property to expire Jan. 31. Mike Hashem, who owns the 25-acre property, is looking for new buyers.

On Tuesday, Hashem said Portland dragged out the approval process and drove SmartCentres away. A SmartCentres spokesman did not return phone calls Tuesday afternoon.

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A neighborhood advocacy group that opposed the development says Hashem can now help

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- Kept in the dark about...  
by *ibsen* 01/19/2008  
11:53 a.m. PT
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#### TODAY'S PHOTOS



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By Fredrick D. Joe

Gaden Shartse monks, 6 from India & 1 from California, build a large, colorful, sand mandala in the artist-in-residence studio on the ground floor of the John Ross Building.

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create a pedestrian-friendly development with local, environmentally conscious businesses.

SmartCentres had proposed a 240,000-square-foot retail center at Northeast 82nd and Siskiyou Street -- 190,000 square feet for the big-box store and the rest for other retailers. Although the developer never divulged a specific tenant, it was widely believed that Wal-Mart was a leading contender because the two companies have worked together on other projects.

Now Hashem is talking about selling smaller retail space at the front of the site and putting light-industrial development in the back.

-- Stephen Beaven

#### Cable panel penalizes Comcast

over switch to digital channels Comcast must pay a \$43,899 penalty for moving several television channels to a more expensive subscription package without enough notice to customers of the cable company.

The Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission set the penalty after a hearing Monday night. Some customers complained after Comcast moved channels including MSNBC, Oxygen and Hallmark from its "limited" and "expanded basic" analog service to more expensive digital service in October. Customers got less than a month's notice.

"To continue getting those channels, they needed to buy a converter box for a dollar more" at least each month, said commission board Chairman Norm Thomas. "And those that lost those channels lost that service. They were paying the same amount for less."

Thomas said Comcast is supposed to give 30 days notice so people can decide whether they want to keep paying for cable the following month. The commission warned the company twice in recent years after it raised rates without enough notice, Thomas said.

Theresa Davis, a Comcast spokeswoman, said the company has consistently given notices to customers with their bills and doesn't believe it violated the franchise agreement. Comcast hasn't decided whether it will pay the fine or appeal, she said.

Comcast can pay a fine or offer a credit to affected subscribers, the commission said. The change affected 43,899 of about 150,000 Comcast customers in Portland, Gresham, Troutdale, Fairview and Wood Village.

-- Catherine Trevison

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