

Ducks see good news, bad news in blowout victory



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# The Oregonian

## Competitor in chief is on a quest to be best

Always confident, the president displays even more assertiveness as he chases a second term

By JODI KANTOR NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

As Election Day approaches, President Barack Obama is sharing a few important things about himself. He has mentioned more than once in recent weeks that he cooks "a really mean chili." He has impressive musical pitch, he told an Iowa audience. He is "a surprisingly good pool player," he informed an interviewer, not to mention (though he does) a doodler of unusual skill.



Obama A powerful will to win

All in all, he joked at a recent New York fundraiser with several famous basketball players in attendance, "it is very rare that I come to an event where I'm like the fifth or sixth most interesting person."

Four years ago, Obama seemed as if he might be a deliberate professor of a leader, maybe with a touch of Hawaiian mellowness. He has turned out also to be a voraciously competitive perfectionist. Aides and friends say so in interviews, but Obama's own words of praise and derision say it best: He is a perpetually aspiring overachiever, often grading himself and others with report-card terms like "outstanding" or "remedial course" (as in: Republicans need one).

As he faces off with Mitt Romney, Please see **OBAMA**, Page A6

## Joblessness edges toward hopelessness



Diana Blaine (left) and Kim Erzen fill out applications at PCC's hiring fair. Both Portland women have been out of work for a year and a half.

Thousands of the long-term unemployed in Oregon search for work seemingly in vain and face an unknown future as benefit cutoffs loom



Photos by BRENT WOJAHN/THE OREGONIAN

Anthony Smith, 40, of Portland speaks with Roth Heating & Cooling's Curissa Guest at a Portland Community College job fair Thursday. Despite plumbing and office experience, he has been out of work since 2008. Today he's among the estimated 177,800 unemployed Oregonians.

### Convention watching

Charles Pope, The Oregonian's Washington, D.C., reporter, will be in Charlotte, N.C., for the Democratic National Convention, which runs Tuesday-Thursday.

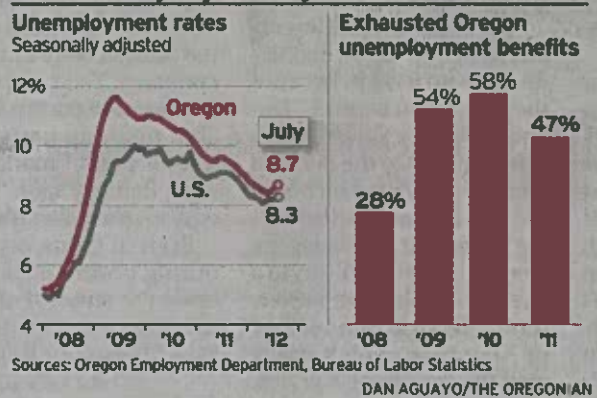
Get the latest complete news of the convention, along with other updates on politics and government, at [oregonlive.com/politics](http://oregonlive.com/politics).

Twitter: Follow reporter Charles Pope on [twitter.com/CharlielDC](http://twitter.com/CharlielDC). Major updates will also be on [twitter.com/OregonianPol](http://twitter.com/OregonianPol).

You also can check #DNC2012.

TV: The major networks will carry one hour of convention coverage each evening. For Portland affiliates, that will be at 7 p.m.

### The unemployment picture



By MOLLY YOUNG THE OREGONIAN

Dave Regan's career disappeared when the economy tanked. After four years and countless job applications, he says it's too depressing to imagine when any opportunity might return. But this month is it. Either the 50-year-old lands a job, or he's forced out of the Portland apartment he can't afford. He has depleted his savings, worked odd jobs and applied to more than 100 openings with the state of Oregon alone. He's not sure what comes next if a job doesn't come through. The recession's lasting effects have redefined the norms of unemployment, thrusting thousands like Regan

worse. Changes that took effect Sunday cut back federal benefits to 63 weeks in Oregon for the long-term unemployed. And short of congressional action, federal emergency unemployment checks will vanish altogether at the end of December. The deadline looms over an estimated 30,000 Oregonians, and millions more nationwide. "It's huge," says Patrick Gihring of Worksystems Inc., a Portland nonprofit that assists the unemployed. "This is the last piece of the safety net." Regan already slipped through that net. His customer service job fell through early in the recession and his joblessness has endured through the supposed recovery. His unemploy-