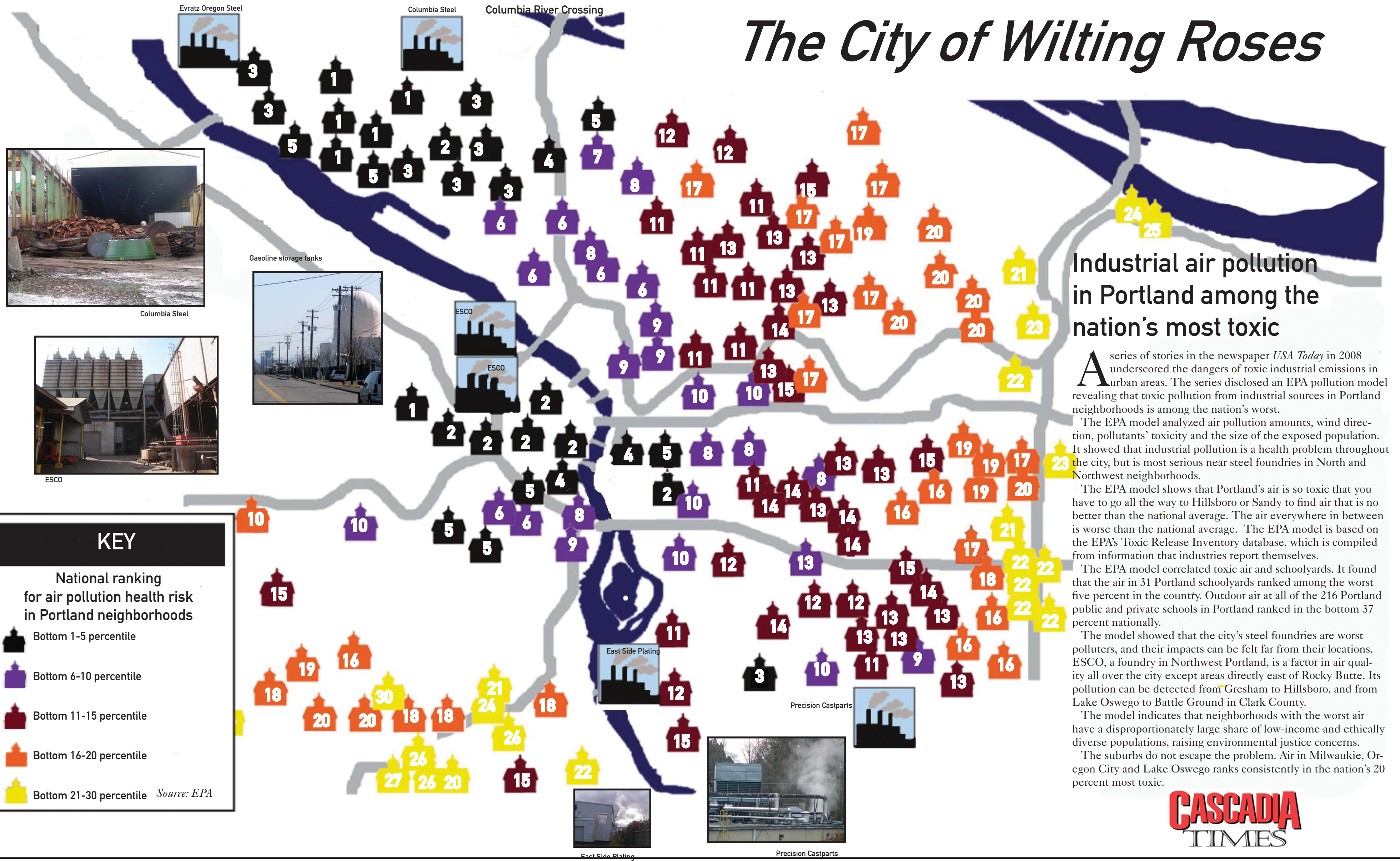


# The City of Wilting Roses



## Industrial air pollution in Portland among the nation's most toxic

A series of stories in the newspaper *USA Today* in 2008 underscored the dangers of toxic industrial emissions in urban areas. The series disclosed an EPA pollution model revealing that toxic pollution from industrial sources in Portland neighborhoods is among the nation's worst.

The EPA model analyzed air pollution amounts, wind direction, pollutants' toxicity and the size of the exposed population. It showed that industrial pollution is a health problem throughout the city, but is most serious near steel foundries in North and Northwest neighborhoods.

The EPA model shows that Portland's air is so toxic that you have to go all the way to Hillsboro or Sandy to find air that is no better than the national average. The air everywhere in between is worse than the national average. The EPA model is based on the EPA's Toxic Release Inventory database, which is compiled from information that industries report themselves.

The EPA model correlated toxic air and schoolyards. It found that the air in 31 Portland schoolyards ranked among the worst five percent in the country. Outdoor air at all of the 216 Portland public and private schools in Portland ranked in the bottom 37 percent nationally.

The model showed that the city's steel foundries are worst polluters, and their impacts can be felt far from their locations. ESCO, a foundry in Northwest Portland, is a factor in air quality all over the city except areas directly east of Rocky Butte. Its pollution can be detected from Gresham to Hillsboro, and from Lake Oswego to Battle Ground in Clark County.

The model indicates that neighborhoods with the worst air have a disproportionately large share of low-income and ethnically diverse populations, raising environmental justice concerns.

The suburbs do not escape the problem. Air in Milwaukie, Oregon City and Lake Oswego ranks consistently in the nation's 20 percent most toxic.



**KEY**

National ranking for air pollution health risk in Portland neighborhoods

- Bottom 1-5 percentile
- Bottom 6-10 percentile
- Bottom 11-15 percentile
- Bottom 16-20 percentile
- Bottom 21-30 percentile

Source: EPA