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Residents favor population stability, says growth study

In a press conference held Friday morning spokesmen for the ASUO Survival Center released the results of a growth study and concluded that city and county officials in the Eugene-Springfield area "should develop alternate plans for the area with little or no population growth as the target."

Terry Esvelt, graduate student in Economics at the University and author of the survey said survey results showed that the majority of Eugene-Springfield residents would like area population to decrease or at least remain at the present level.

Esvelt said the idea for the survey came from a similar report done by a student organization at the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario known as Pollution Probe.

The Pollution Probe report expressed concern over a 1990 plan that projected a tripling of population in the London area. Pollution Probe was "afraid that the population projection was a self-fulfilling prophecy—that predicting growth was one means of promoting growth." Members of the Survival Center examined the 1990 Plan and Willamette Valley: Choice For the Future and agreed that the same growth prediction—promotion syndrome might exist in the Eugene-Springfield area. The Survival center survey was made to determine how people in the area did feel about growth.

Esvelt and 12 volunteers conducted the four question, random telephone survey during winter term and received 285 responses. Esvelt said Steven Seitz, assistant professor of political science at the University and an "expert in surveying techniques," had been consulted to aid in drawing up the survey.

Question one asked: "Do you think the population of the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area should (1) decrease, (2) remain the same, (3) increase somewhat, or (4) double or even triple by the year

2000? The results were: decrease—13 per cent, remain the same—50.2 per cent, increase somewhat—26.7 per cent, double or triple—8.1 per cent, don't know—2.1 per cent.

Esvelt said the results of question one indicated that elected officials should perhaps give more attention "to finding viable means for stabilizing the present population level."

Question two asked: "If this population growth does occur, do you think the Eugene-Springfield area will be able to develop an adequate transportation system?" Results: yes—57.2 per cent, no—30.9 per cent, don't know—11.9 per cent.

Question three read: "Do you think this area will be able to adequately solve any environmental problems that may arise with increased population?" Results: yes—50.9 per cent, no—40 per cent, don't know—9.1 per cent.

Esvelt attributed the "optimistic" responses to questions two and three to the phrasing of the questions. He said the clause "will be able to," found in both questions, could have qualified the questions in a misleading way. He felt the affirmative answers were directed toward the question of whether or not the community would have the technological ability to solve the problems.

The final question read: "Do you think the 'general quality of life' can be maintained as the population increases?" Results: yes—34.4 per cent, no—58.6 per cent, don't know—7.0 per cent. Esvelt said the results to question four "reveals that there are problems involved with population growth that technology cannot solve." He said that the results to questions one and four combined indicated "a strong opposition to growth in the Eugene-Springfield area."

Survival Center director Mike Dotten, said that present plans for the survey include its presentation to the Eugene City Council.

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Landlords may legally raise rents--but with 'restraint'

Editor's note.

This question and answer column is being produced by a small staff of tenants working out of Off-Campus Housing at the University because a great deal of misinformation and a lack of knowledge exists in the area of tenant and housing problems.

The information in this column is not intended to be legal advice and should not be relied on in answering any specific legal question or problem. A slight modification of the facts may result in a radically different answer. To resolve a specific problem there is no substitute for individual legal advice, contact an attorney or Legal Aid.

Under Nixon's Phase III, can the landlord increase my rent?

Yes. Under Phase III, which ended in January, rents were generally limited to 2½ per cent increases per year. There were some exceptions for capital improvements or increases in some expenses. On January 11 the President ended Phase II, lifting almost all rent controls. Landlords are expected to exercise voluntary restraint.

According to the National Tenants' Organization, the lifting of the rent controls was unfortunate. The controls, as inadequate as they were, did help to some extent.

A confusing provision of Phase III is that it does not define what is meant by voluntary restraint. The White House does not intend

to issue standards or binding requirements. A program summary of Phase III indicates this step is being taken, "in view of the expanding supply of rental units, increasing vacancy rates and the modest rate of inflation shown in this sector." In other words, a landlord is pretty much free to increase rents as he pleases.



Congress is considering imposing mandatory ceilings on rents in cities with vacancy rates of less than 5.5 per cent, of which Eugene is one, on the theory that those cities are more apt to experience sharp rent increases. No one is sure what other cities in the Northwest would be effected by the bill, data from the 1970

Census will have to be updated. The rent control was recently adopted by the Senate 50 to 38 over the opposition of both Senators Mark Hatfield and Bob Packwood. Rent control is opposed by President Nixon. The bill is now under consideration in the House of Representatives.

A bill establishing an Oregon Fair Rent Commission was recently introduced in the Oregon Legislature. The Commission would prescribe and enforce rules and regulations controlling rental increases. The bill, Senate Bill 716, is being considered by the Senate Consumer and Business Affairs Committee which is chaired by Senator Betty Roberts. You can write her at the Capitol Building, Salem, Oregon 97310 to express your support of rent control, or for information about the bill.

The Governor's Tax Plan, which will be voted on by the people May 1, also offers the possibility of lower rents. As passed by the legislature the plan provides for property tax relief for renters. The relief would come as a credit on your Oregon Income Tax and for low income renters could result in a tax refund of as much as 21 per cent of your rent.

If you have a question about a housing problem, write to Housing Problems, 319 EMU. General or common inquiries will be answered through this column.



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