

EPA sets rules for lead levels

By CATHERINE SIEGNER
Of the Emerald

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has adopted new regulations for lead concentrations in the air, but may amend the Clean Air Act if the new standards prove "too inflationary."

The new rules require states to reduce lead concentrations to 1.5 micrograms per each cubic meter of air. Current levels are between two and four micrograms on the average.

The lead and copper smelting industry will be hardest hit by the new standards and will have to shell out \$530 million over the next four years to comply.

Smelters only contribute about 5 percent to the air pollution problem, however, while automobile exhaust makes up 95 percent of airborne lead.

The EPA has adopted separate regulations to reduce the lead content in gasoline.

Automobiles are the largest contribution to air pollution in Lane County, since there are no copper or lead smelters here. The new EPA standards will not affect Eugene's air quality.

"We have done a little testing (of lead concentrations) and our existing filters keep levels down below the new EPA standards," says Ralph Johnston, technical services supervisor for the Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority.

"It isn't going to have a great impact on us here in Eugene," Johnston says. "We're in pretty good shape."

Eugene's problem with air pollution comes from the level of suspended particulates in the air. Particulates come from road dust, construction work, local industry, and are mostly byproducts of wood processing.

Field burning contributes a share also and has been responsible for Eugene's failure to comply with federal air quality standards.

The states have nine months to submit plans to the EPA for enforcing the new lead standards. Some smelting companies have indicated they would rather close down their operations than try to meet the high costs of compliance.

Meanwhile, the EPA has stated it would try to work out a compromise and not risk the economic impact of shutdowns.

Taxes may increase according to survey

If Ballot Measure 6 is approved by voters in November, it could cost some Lane County homeowners as much as \$50 a year in increased property taxes, according to a survey compiled by Lane County Commissioner Jerry Rust.

The survey, compiled over the past several months, gathered information on 10 typical homes in 10 areas of Lane County, including Eugene, Springfield and Cottage Grove.

Using figures supplied by the state Legislative Revenue Office and the county Department of Assessment and Taxation, the survey compared the effects of both Measure 6 and Measure 11 on property taxes.

If approved, Measure 6 would limit state property taxes to 1.5 percent above 1975 assessed value of the property. Under the terms of Measure 11, the state would pay half of the property taxes on owner-occupied homes. Those payments would not be more than \$1,500.

In most cases, taxes paid under Measure 11's provision were considerably less, says Peter Bartel, an aide to Rust.

Although proponents of Measure 6 claim it would reduce property taxes for the middle-income tax payer, the survey points out that homeowners could be paying up to \$400 more a year in taxes in Eugene.

Based on an assessed value of \$45,300, a Eugene homeowner would pay \$580 a year in taxes under Measure 6 and \$626 a year under Measure 11.

If the home was reappraised or sold before the end of the year, the owner would pay \$1,047 in taxes under Measure 6 compared to \$626 under Measure 11, the survey says.

Most homeowners in other county cities would pay more taxes if Measure 6 is approved, says Bill Muir, the survey's author.

"If you owned a home before 1975, Measure 6 would give you greater tax relief," Muir says. "But after that year, most taxpayers would be favorably affected by Measure 11."

Muir says the survey was compiled on an objective basis, using only information provided by the state revenue and the county taxation offices to estimate the measures' effects.

J Exams Scheduled

Students who think they may want to take Journalism 250, Journalistic Writing, in Winter Term but have not passed the Cooperative English Test and the School of Journalism Typing Proficiency Test must take those tests during Fall Term, according to Journalism Dean Galen R. Rarick.

The tests, which students are required to pass to be admitted to Journalism 250, will not be given at the start of Winter Term.

The Cooperative English Test will be given at 3:30 p.m. in 133 Gilbert on Monday, Oct. 16, and Tuesday, Nov. 14. The typing test will be given at 3:30 p.m. in 218 Allen on Tuesday, Oct. 17, and Wednesday, Nov. 15.

Students should sign up immediately for these tests, in the School of Journalism office, 210 Allen.

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