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Umbrellas on bricks



Photo by Patrick Sullivan

Rains descend,
temperatures rise;
soggy weather on tap

After an unusually dry and frigid January, the weather has returned to normal as temperatures rise and rains descend on campus. Hundreds of umbrellas unfurled yesterday to usher in the showers, but University students weren't the only ones who had to take the good with the bad. Tuesday's low for the nation was 16 below zero in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., but skies there were clear - Tampa, Fla., however, enjoyed 77-degree weather under cloudy skies.

For the Eugene-Springfield area, the high was 51 degrees. Forecasts call for rain at least through Thursday, when chances decrease to 90 percent. Temperatures should range from the low 40s to low 50s. The rest of the western state can expect periods of rain Friday through Sunday.

Atiyeh tax plan leaves renters short on relief

By GREG WASSON
Of the Emerald

SALEM — Gov. Victor Atiyeh has repeatedly promised that any plan for property tax relief would provide renters with relief "equivalent" to that provided homeowners.

To arrive at that equivalency, budgeteers use state-wide averages when computing the effects of different plans. Those averages fail to take into account differences among specific areas.

Under the rebate program, renters would receive about 2.1 percent of their rent back from the state.

The rebate is aimed at those in the mid- to upper-income ranges and would not affect relief currently provided by the Homeowner and Renter Refund Program (HAARP).

For homeowners, relief would be provided not by a check from the state but by the state's assumption of any taxes above the rate of \$15,000. The rate would be adjusted to compensate for special purchases approved by voters in bond election.

A \$45,000 home which Ram Realty estimates would rent for \$300 a month, yields widely varying figures for renters and homeowners according to the two formulas.

A person who rents such a home would qualify for about a \$75 rebate from the state. Someone owning that home would receive, albeit indirectly, through state payments of property taxes, about \$315, over four times as much.

Lee Johnson, Atiyeh's executive assistant, explains that to make the figures equivalent, the state must be viewed as a whole.

"You're not going to get exactly the same relief in different areas. The only way you can administer a rental relief program is on the basis of a state-wide average."

To balance Eugene's situation, one must look at other areas like Roseburg, seventy miles to the south. Because of the large amount of federal timber receipts routed to Douglas County, Roseburg (the county seat) and the rest of the county have low tax rates when compared with Eugene.

For the \$45,000 home renting for \$300 a month, Roseburg homeowners would get no relief under the Atiyeh plan while a renter would receive about \$90.

According to Rep. Mary Burrows, R-Eugene, the discrepancy between relief levels provided Eugene and Roseburg under the Atiyeh plan illustrates the bugaboo presented by Oregon's divergent nature.

"It's almost impossible to resolve the tax problem as long as we have a flat rate across the state. One just can't address everyone in a like manner because the property tax burden varies so much."

But the Atiyeh plan attempts to apply a flat rate and would appear to be in trouble because of it.

today

Opinions clashed when Joe Esherick, associate professor of Chinese History, met Asia scholar Raymond Lotta to discuss Chinese normalization. See Page 3A.

The popularity of jogging has peaked in the U.S. with 25 million Americans running regularly. Dr. Donald England of the Eugene Hospital and Clinic says jogging has drawbacks as well as benefits. Story begins on Page 1B.

The battle lines are drawn for October's World Health Organization conference where nutrition experts, religious leaders, and Nestle Co. representatives will discuss the use of infant formula in the Third World. Meanwhile, the Nestle boycott continues. Story on Page 8A.