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From Associated Press reports

Americans divided, says economic poll

NEW YORK

Americans are divided sharply over whether Pres. Reagan's economic program is helping or hurting the nation, the latest Associated Press-NBC News poll says.

Unemployment remained the top choice for the most important economic problem for the government to help control, but inflation was still the problem that affected more people personally.

In the March 29-30 poll, a scientific random telephone sampling of 1,603 adults across the country, 37 percent said they think Reagan's program is helping, while 36 percent said it is hurting. The rest said they were not sure.

The president has vowed to stick with his tax and spending cuts and a tight money supply despite high unemployment and interest rates and a federal

budget deficit that is larger than expected.

The poll also said public confidence in the president's economic program is slipping. Fifteen percent said they have more confidence in it now than a year ago, while 34 percent said they have less and 49 percent said their feelings are the same. Two percent weren't sure.

Unemployment, meanwhile, remained the most important economic problem for the government to help control: 45 percent said unemployment, 27 percent said interest rates, 24 percent said inflation and 4 percent were undecided.

At the same time, inflation affected most people personally: 49 percent said inflation, 30 percent said interest rates, 17 percent said unemployment and 4 percent were unsure.

Private business pays governors' tab

SALEM

Oregon Gov. Vic Atiyeh has asked private business to pick up most of the tab for the Western Governors' Conference to be held June 2-5 at Salishan Lodge.

Because of Oregon's budget crunch, the governor has forbidden use of state funds to pay for the conference, says Denny Miles, Atiyeh's administrative assistant for communications. Instead, he's set up a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation which is soliciting money to pay the bills.

Governors from 17 western states and territories in the Pacific have been invited to the

meeting, along with the premiers of four Canadian provinces and the commissioner of the Yukon Territory.

Representatives of the Reagan administration and top industrial leaders also are scheduled to attend. Topics for discussion include food production in the West, Canadian-U.S. relations, housing and the economy, international trade and New Federalism.

Atiyeh's experiment marks the first time a state hosting the annual meeting has avoided paying the overhead for the conference out of tax dollars, Miles said. He estimated the cost at \$100,000, of which \$35,000 has already been raised.

Miles said Oregon taxpayers will be paying the salaries of Atiyeh's staff assigned to work on the conference, but other costs will be borne by participants and Western Governors' Conference Inc., the nonprofit corporation.

Iranians mobilize 'kiddie corps'

DEZFUL, Iran

"See this little boy. He is one of our fighters. This little boy helped fight and capture these big men."

Speaking at this frontline outpost of the Iran-Iraq war was a spokesman for the Iranian army. Standing beside him was a boy, described as 13 years old. The "big men" were 2,200 Iraqi prisoners and the boy was one of their guards.

The boy, the spokesman said, is one of thousands trained for combat and other war duties. Some, he said, have already excelled in combat.

Iranian press accounts tell of child warriors who cleared a mine field by marching across it, knowing they could die in a single step.

Martyrdom is highly esteemed by Iran's Shiite Moslems and a soldier becomes a martyr if killed in the war with Iraq because it regarded as an extension of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's Islamic revolution.

The 13-year-old introduced to reporters was armed with a U.S.-made assault rifle and was said by the army spokesman to have helped in Iran's offensive in which the Iraqis were pushed back 24 miles.

The young irregulars are part of a new militia called "Baseej" (Mobilization), a virtual kiddie corps that receives arms training from the more adult Revolutionary Guards.

The Baseej recruits help distribute food and control traffic and sometimes patrol the streets at night.

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