

# Recycling:

By Harry Esteve  
Of the Emerald

**SEASIDE** — Recycling is falling out of the hands of non-profit groups in it for the environment and into the hands of businesses in it for the money, according to several speakers at a weekend recycling convention.

But cooperation between the two groups will mean more efficient recycling, the speakers noted.

Representatives from both non-profit and profit recycling organizations gathered in unusual harmony for the fourth annual conference, held at Seaside.

The three-day event, sponsored by the Association of Oregon Recyclers (AOR), included workshops and speeches on how to recycle everything from old buildings to plastic pop bottles.

The conference, called "The Business of Recycling in the 80s," dealt with current market conditions, business strategies, tax incentives for recyclers and the future of recycling.

The cooperation between private trash haulers and representatives of the beverage container industry was striking, according to conference participants. In some states — California and Washington in particular — recycling organizations often are resented by trash companies who see them as competitors financed by tax money.

But Oregon doesn't have these problems because recyclers and industry representatives here "have an unwritten, but certainly not an unspoken rule that we kind of pack the guns and leave them by the door," said AOR chairer Lee Barret.

In fact, "the trend in Oregon is toward recycling being done more and more by the garbage hauler," rather than by

community based or volunteer organizations such as Lane County's BRING, Barret said.

Haulers have the capital necessary to make them successful, he added.

Barret was an early member of the Portland Recycling Team, one of Oregon's first non-profit organizations dedicated to collecting and selling newspapers, bottles and cans for re-use.

The organization, which at one time was the biggest of its kind in the United States, currently is considering selling out to a profit company.

But some members of the organization are worried that the interested company may take over "just to phase us out," said Mark Peterman, a lawyer with the Portland Recycling Team.

Other members have philosophical reasons for wanting the organization to continue as a non-profit corporation, Peterman said. They are worried that a profit company might not be dedicated enough to the idea of recycling.

Barret didn't agree with this reasoning. "If a profit company comes along and does the job better than we can do the job, we really shouldn't fight them for that recycled material," he said.

"I don't care if guys from Mars come down and do the recycling as long as it gets done."

Environmental reasons shouldn't be the only reasons for recycling, Barret said. Profit motives should be just as viable.

"As long as the guy that's in it for the bucks does virtually all the stuff that the guy who's in it for the environment does, then what the hell difference does it make?"

Barret stressed that recyclers in other states need to learn from Oregon's example and find a "common ground" with

## To profit or not?



Photo by Dave Kao

Once the pet project of various charities, the recycling of paper, bottles and cans has become a profitable venture.

profit industries. He uses music as an example.

"I think Mozart is the best and you think Bach is the best. It would be senseless for us to argue over which of the two is the greatest composer. It would be easier for us to both step back and say 'Hey, we both agree that classical music is where it's at as far as music is concerned and not worry about the differ-

ences.' You can always find differences."

In the closing speech of the conference, the president of a Portland metals firm said industry will be paying much more attention to re-using resources such as glass, aluminum and paper. Cities will be including more recycling in their solid waste management programs, he added.

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