

Rental car tax sparks owners into enlisting student support

By Aleta Zak
Of the Emerald

Owners of local vehicle rental businesses are planning to enlist University students in their campaign against the new Lane County tax on car rentals, according to one rental firm owner.

Steve Ruiz, who has led the fight against the recently imposed tax, says he'll organize a campus petition drive to put the issue on the ballot next year. Ruiz, who owns Oregon Rent-a-Car, estimates between 10 and 20 percent of his customers are college students.

Lane county commissioners approved a 5 percent tax on automobile rentals two weeks ago. Revenues from the tax, which takes effect July 15, are earmarked for county park maintenance.

County officials expect a revenue of between \$100,000 and \$200,000 from the tax, excluding administrative costs.

The tax only applies to motor vehicles that carry less than 10 passengers and not to trucks, motor homes or motorcycles.

The car rental dealers need to get 4,158 signatures of registered voters certified by July 12 to put the tax to a vote in the May 1984 primary election, says David Spriggs, county elections administrator.

Spriggs says the elections office must approve the petition before the group can begin circulating it in the community.

If the required signatures are submitted by the deadline, the tax will be postponed until the public votes on the issue, Spriggs says.

Duayne Veach, owner of Pre-Owned Car Rentals,

says he will enlist students who have rented from him in the past to help circulate the petitions.

"I honestly believe we can get the signatures we need," says Veach. "I have talked to owners of other businesses downtown, and they tell me they are against it because they don't think their customers will like it."

Another business owner, John Hallauer of Ajax Rent-a-Car, says about 20 percent of his rentals are to students over 21.

Although he opposes the tax, Hallauer says he does not believe the petition has much chance of passing.

Commissioner Chuck Ivey, who voted for the tax at an April 13 meeting, says the commissioners originally intended to tax out-of-town tourists renting vehicles for recreation.

Before the tax was approved, the business owners compiled rental statistics of 13 local rental agencies. The statistics showed tourists rented 2 to 10 percent of the rental cars.

"Sure, some students are going to be affected," says Ivey. "But we have to look at the overall picture. No tax is completely equitable, but we are trying to make it as equitable as possible."

Only two local firms rent vehicles to persons 18 years or older, says Colin McIntosh, manager of the National Car Rental, one of the two firms.

McIntosh says nearly one third of his business comes from college students.

"We don't support the tax at all," he says. "Only 8 percent of my business is tourists, and the rest are local business people and residents."

South African offers way to end apartheid

Calling the South African apartheid system a "very complex problem," Slumko Sowazi elaborated on a possible solution to his country's dilemma described in an article on Sowazi in Monday's Emerald.

The South African whites need to "educate themselves and challenge the system," says Sowazi, a University architecture major. "There is a tragic majority of whites who are apathetic."

This indifference stems from the whites' fear of "losing their power and being governed by a race always promoted as inferior."

Whites must band together with black leaders to create a system that allows blacks the right to vote, says Sowazi.

"They (the whites) are the only ones, at the moment, who can shake the government without much bloodshed."

Sowazi also clarified the South African woman's role, which stretches beyond acting as a "nannie."

Women also have been the driving force behind the black independence movement.

"They have been the leaders of our struggle. They have charged the government face to face."

This political activity is spawned by the desolation they experience on the barren bantustans, which serve as squatter camps for black families.

Sowazi stresses the tight bonds formed between the blacks. The government's attempt to separate the tribes has been unsuccessful because "of intermarriage and our strong sense of family."

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Some positions require BA/BS degree plus experience. PC provides living allowance, medical care, travel, cultural and language training and \$4200 cash readjustment allowance after 2-year service. Married or single, no dependents. US citizens only, no upper age limit.

INFORMATION TABLE: EUGENE PUBLIC LIBRARY, May 3-5, 10 am to 3 pm. Film: May 5, 7 pm in Gallery. **INFORMATION TABLE: EMU Lobby,** May 3-5, 10 am-2 pm. **GROUP MEETING:** Room 112 EMU, May 3, 4-5 pm. **FILM:** Room 101 EMU, May 4, 4-5 pm. **FOR INFORMATION CALL 686-3235.** **INTERVIEWS:** May 4-5, 246 Susan Campoel. 806-4-29

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Thursday, April 28, 1983