

# Lane County a step ahead of recycling law

By Karen Creighton  
Of the Emerald

Oregon is continuing its tradition of progressive environmental laws with the recent implementation of the Recycling Opportunity Act.

The act is designed to help conserve valuable natural resources and landfills, and to provide more jobs and improved economies as more Oregonians recycle. The law also provides community education and promotion of recycling in Oregon.

"Senate Bill 405, which was passed by the 1983 legislature, is the most comprehensive recycling statute in the country today," said Governor Vic Atiyeh in a recent press conference.

Maryanne Fitzgerald, recycling specialist at the Department of Environmental Quality office

in Portland, said the bill has three aspects:

- Every disposal site in Oregon is now required to accept recycleable materials.

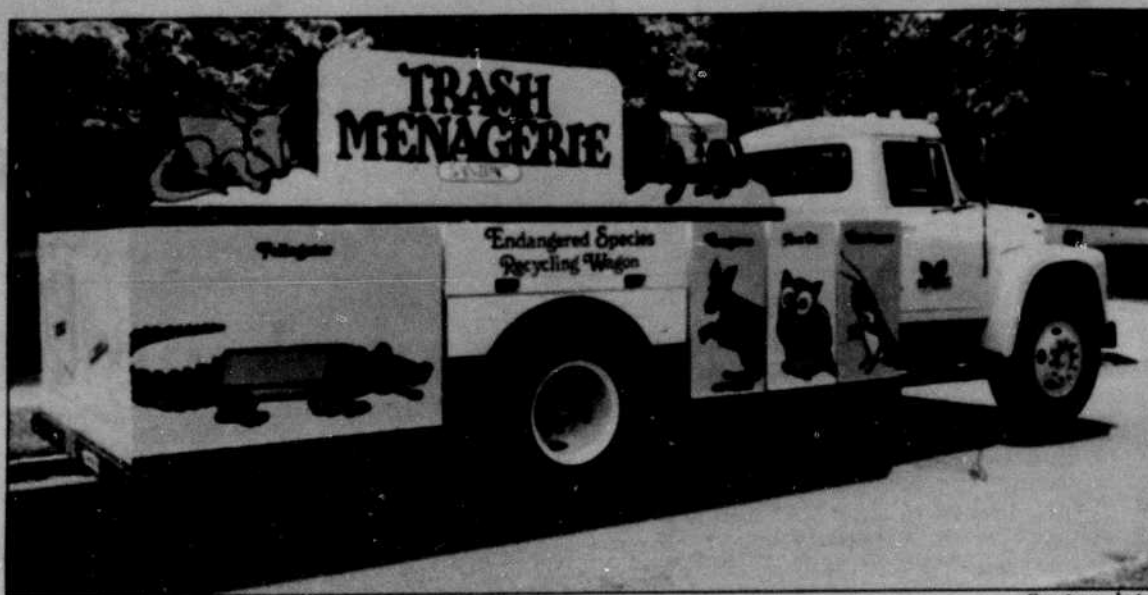
- All solid waste collectors in cities with populations over 4,000 are required to pick up recycleable materials left on the curbside at least once monthly.

- Towns with populations under 4,000 now must have recycling bins at solid waste depots and other convenient areas.

The newly enacted law means increased costs for garbage collectors, Fitzgerald said, but there has been no opposition to the law that she knows of.

"Garbage collectors realize this is the way of the future. We can't just keep making mounds of garbage," she said.

Ken Sandusky of Lane County Waste Management said Lane



Courtesy photo

**The Trash Menagerie is one vehicle that will be picking up recycleables along Lane County curbsides with the enactment of Senate Bill 405.**

County was following a similar recycling policy two years before the law was enacted. The county began designing its own waste reduction plan in the spring of 1983, several months before the new law was passed by the State Legislature, and modified its plan as the state law was designed, Sandusky said.

Lane County operates all of the county's landfills. Seventeen of these are open to the public and do full-line recycling — accepting glass, flattened tin cans, aluminum, cardboard, newspaper, motor oil and scrap metal. Some sites also accept repairable items like furniture and appliances.

For the last two years, Lane County has also given a \$2 per ton discount to help offset costs to garbage collectors who collect curbside recycleables, Sandusky said. Lane County officials realized two years ago there would be a long period when collectors would be losing money because of extra

labor, storage and capital costs involved in collecting recycleables, he said.

The county offered the discount to help garbage collectors make the transition to recycling before it was required by state law, he added.

The county's progressive laws were made possible by the politics and policies of the Lane County Board of Commissioners, Sandusky said.

"Without the funds, none of this would have happened," he said, referring to the early implementation.

Despite the extra costs, many garbage collectors feel recycleable materials are worth saving, said Ken Hunter of Ken's Sanitary Service and Recycling. Hunter's company is one of five that form Eugene Recycling, Inc.

The five garbage collection services joined two years ago to share the extra labor and capital costs involved in recycling, Hunter said. The collectors sell the recycleable materials to

Weyerhaeuser Co., who hauls all the materials, except paper and cardboard, to Portland markets, he said.

Because the markets are not close, Weyerhaeuser can pay only minimal rates to Eugene's garbage collectors, Hunter said. If more people recycle, markets may move closer, creating more profit and jobs in the Eugene area, he said.

Until then, garbage collectors gather recycleables as a service to customers and the community, rather than for profit, he said.

Recycling can be profitable, though, according to Greg Buchanan of Northwest Paper Fibers in Eugene. "If it weren't profitable, we wouldn't be here," he said.

Northwest Paper Fibers buys recycleable commodities, then packages papers for mill use, exporting paper to Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Canada, as well as to mills around Oregon.

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discriminates against the poor, saying that people should not have to choose between affordable housing and "beloved members of their families."

Disease is not a concern because he and other cat owners keep their pets indoors, he wrote. He said he knows of four cat owners in the complex besides himself.

The housing department sends letters to people reported to have cats in their apartments, instructing alleged owners to get rid of them, Gaddini said. If the department receives two or more complaints about a person within six months, it begins eviction proceedings, he said.

But eviction is approached on a case-by-case basis, he said.

"I don't think we would start the eviction process unless we were clearly sure this person had a cat," he said. The housing department will not visit residents' apartments to see if they have cats, he added.

At Sunday's meeting, Harn-den said she and tenants in her area think the policy should be changed. Cat owners could be required to keep their cats indoors and put tags on them, and prove that their cats had received their shots and had been spayed or neutered, she said.

Rick May, another ACT representative, suggested requiring cat owners to pay a non-refundable deposit.

Policies should guarantee that no one suffers, Gaddini said. The current policy does that, he said. But if people are allowed to have cats, no one can guarantee that the cats will not scratch children or spread toxoplasmosis, he said.

Cats also will cause damage, he said, with the added costs leading to a rent increase. Enforcing a limited cat-allowance policy also will cost money, he said.

Judy Newberry, another ACT representative, said she suffered when she was forced to give up her cat to move to Amazon. She cannot afford to live anywhere else, she said.

After discussion, the group appointed six people to investigate the situation. Two appointees oppose changing the policy, two favor a change and two are neutral. ACT instructed the committee to write a position statement for each side and outline a list of possible options.

Amazon tenants will receive the statements and vote on the options. If they approve of a change, ACT will present the proposal to the Family Housing Policy Board at its next meeting in October. If the board approves a change, the proposal will be subject to review and approval by the housing department.