

Delegates foresee benefits in Oregon-China exchange

By **Tonnie Dakin**
Of the Emerald

A seven-member delegation from Lane County, including County Commissioner Jerry Rust and Bean Comrada, director of affirmative action at the University, recently returned from a trip to China to establish economic and educational ties with the country.

The group left for China on Dec. 1 and returned Dec. 24, visiting Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Oregon's sister province of Fujian.

The province of Fujian is located on the southeast coast of China, directly across from Taiwan and near Hong Kong.

The Fujian Culture Bureau and the Oregon Arts Commission arranged the exchange in order to stimulate a mutually beneficial program in which cultural, commercial and educational ideas and products could be exchanged.

"The picture that I am trying to create... is that we had a business and cultural mission... and I felt that we accomplished our purposes," Rust said.

Rust, who visited China three years ago, said he saw improvements in the lifestyles of the Chinese people. The clothing is more up-to-date, and food in the marketplaces is more accessible than before, he said.

"It's really obvious that the people have more money," Rust said.

Rust also noticed a resurgence of free markets, or marketplaces where food is not regulated and subsidized by the government, he said. Although rice, cooking oil and milk are still rationed and subsidized, most free markets carry other food according to supply and demand, Rust said.

The construction and improvement of many hotels, international trade centers, stadiums and highways seem to point to an improved economy, he said. "There's just a lot of intensity of building going on everywhere," Rust said.

The improvement of the Chinese lifestyle and economy seems to stem from the fact that China, after a ten-year struggle to survive Mao Tse-tung's Cultural Revolution which stopped foreign contact, has now, under Deng Xiaoping, embarked on an "open door" policy, which invites foreign ideas and investments, Rust said.

"We saw evidence that these reforms... are having the desired effect," he said.

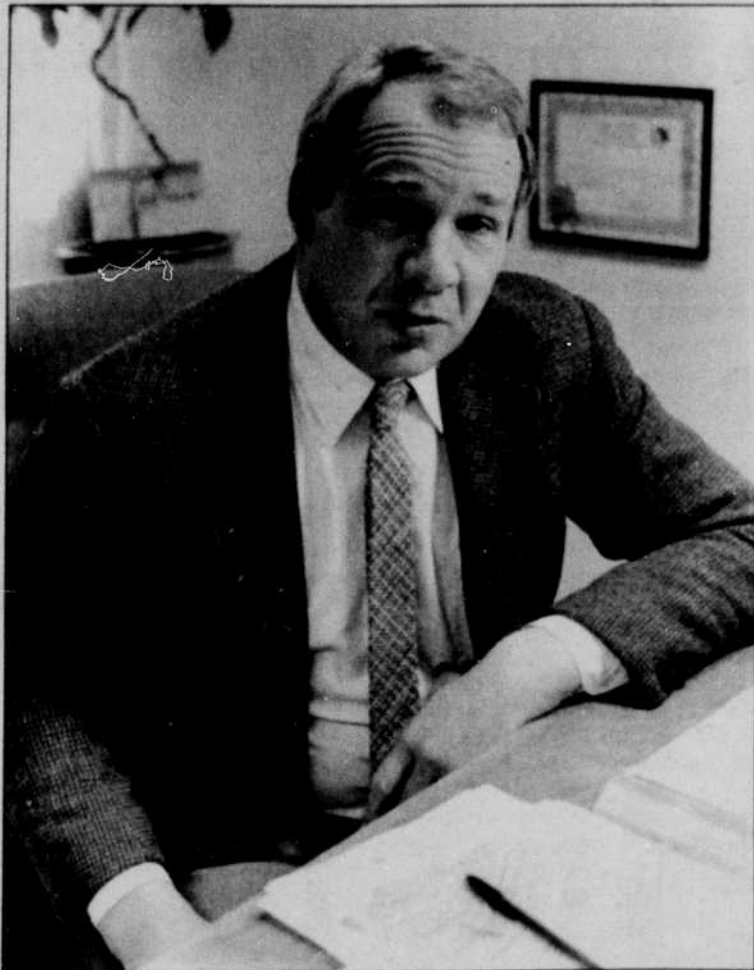


Photo by Bobbie Lo

Lane County Commissioner Jerry Rust, one of seven delegates to Oregon's sister province of Fujian, said he sees improvement in the Chinese lifestyle.

"Xiaoping's melding the planned economy... and introducing incentive systems, so you have part socialism and part capitalism... and it's powering the economy... people are self-interested right now," Rust said.

The exchange between the state of Oregon and the province of Fujian is likely to be successful because of the similarities between the two places, Rust said.

"Oregon is rather underdeveloped and out of the mainstream of America... and both Oregon and Fujian have great potential," he said.

The Chinese are anxious to have an exchange with Oregon "and I think we should be ready to respond," Rust said. "They can use our technology, we can use their ancient wisdom."

One business idea proposed

Turn to China, Page 18



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