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## Senate approves bill requiring helmet use



SALEM (AP) — Children under age 16 would be required to wear a helmet while riding a bike on a public roadway under a bill passed Wednesday by the Oregon Senate.

The bill, SB 1088, sets a fine of \$25 for an infraction. But the sponsor, Sen. Ron Cease, D-Portland, said the idea was to persuade children to wear helmets, not to write tickets.

"We are not trying to be punitive," Cease said. "We want young people to wear helmets."

Cease called the measure the "fourth corner of a square" of public safety laws that already require helmets for motorcyclists, seat belts for motorists and car seats for small children.

Children are particularly susceptible to peer pressure and won't wear helmets if it's unpopular with their friends, Cease said. The law would help overcome a notion that children who wear helmets are nerds, he said.

Sen. Wes Cooley, R-Powell Butte, said brain injuries were the leading cause of death and dis-

ability from bicycling accidents. Studies show helmets reduce brain injuries by 85 percent, he said.

There are about 950 fatalities each year in the United States among the country's 96 million bicyclists.

"Bicycle helmets can prevent these injuries," Cooley, a former world-class motorcycle racer, said.

Cease said groups and corporations, including a parent-teacher group in Grants Pass and retailer Fred Meyer, were working to make low-cost or free helmets available to needy children.

The bill originally required all bicyclists to wear a helmet but was amended to apply only to children. Under the bill, parents or guardians would be held responsible for children caught riding without a helmet.

The bill would take effect on July 1, 1994, giving advocates time to make sure helmets are available to children and that children and parents understand the need, Cease said.

The bill passed 26-4 and now goes to the House.

## May nears rainfall record

PORTLAND (AP) — The spring of 1993 has been a wet one, even by Oregon's damp standards.

Last month was the second-wettest May at Portland International Airport since records first were kept there in the 1940s.

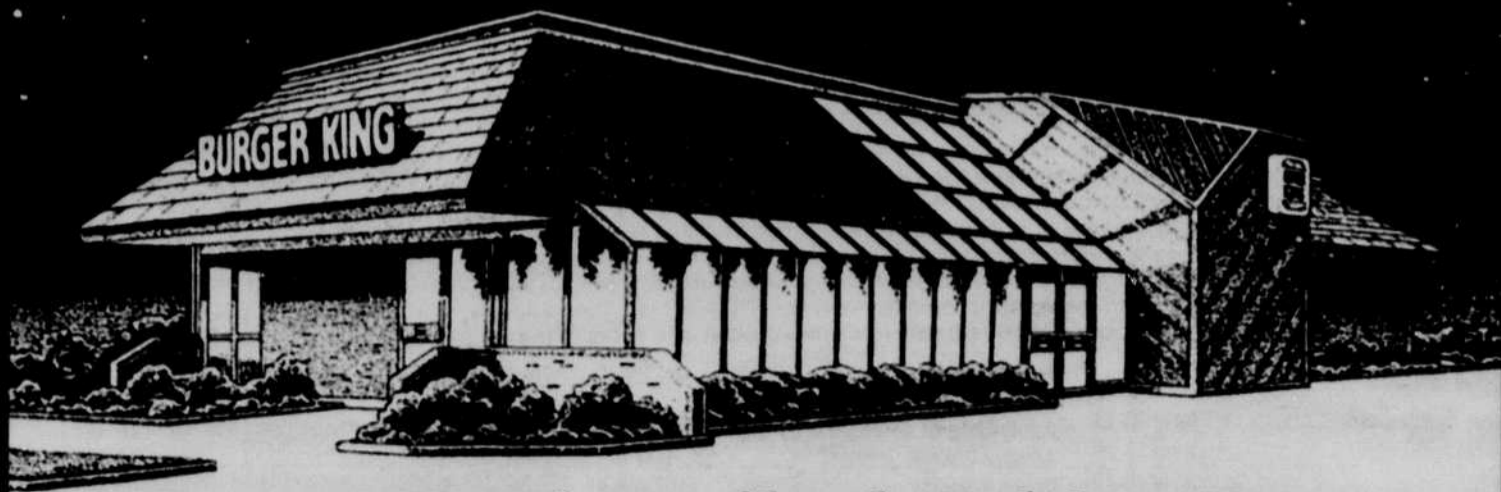
This week, a persistent weather system has sent a series of thunderstorms across the state. While the system is predicted to move away soon, another is expected to take its place, just in time for Portland's Rose Festival.

"The way the pattern is now, the chances are pretty good for rainy days throughout the Rose Festival," said George Miller, meteorologist in charge of the National Weather Service office in Portland. "We should get a break midweek, around Thursday, but the low is just going to be replaced by another one."

The May rainfall total was 4.36 inches in Portland, more than double the average of 2.06 and just short of the all-time record of 4.57 set in 1945. In Eugene, 6.92 inches of rain fell. The average is 2.16.

Other totals included 4.90 inches in Astoria, where the average is 3.02; 3.59 inches in Salem, where the average is 1.88; 2.63 inches in Medford, where the average is 1 inch; and 1.51 inches in Pendleton, where the average is .99.

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