

# No argument that sales tax would hurt merchants



NORTHWEST

PORTLAND (AP) — No one argues that creation of an Oregon sales tax would hurt business for merchants along the state's borders.

There is a lot of disagreement, however, over how much retailers would lose if they no longer could offer tax-free shopping to residents of surrounding states.

A Washington Department of Revenue study figured that Oregon businesses would lose \$165 million a year in retail sales if Oregonians adopt a sales tax. The Oregon Legislature's Revenue Office estimates sales losses of \$125 million to \$150

million a year.

But the privately financed Cascade Policy Institute in Portland has published a report estimating sales losses could run as much as \$3.2 billion a year and eliminate 16,000 jobs by a "very conservative estimate."

"Oregon has an unusual ratio of retail sales to income almost certainly reflecting a high migration of non-Oregonians into the state to buy non-taxable goods," wrote Richard Vedder, an economics professor at Ohio University and author of the report.

Lorrie Jo Brown, who did the Washington study, said Vedder failed to consider that Portland's larger selection of stores would continue to draw many Washing-

ton shoppers.

Others said retail losses would not be nearly as large as some have warned.

"I think it's a little overblown as far as what the sales tax would do to the retail business" in Oregon, said John Newman, district manager for Target Stores and chairman of the Oregon Retail Council.

Newman supports the 5 percent sales tax plan that will be on the Nov. 9 ballot. Money generated by the tax would be used to pay for schools.

Several studies have determined that retail spending in Oregon is above the national average, which some believe is fueled at least in part by tax-free shopping.

"The one true positive we have in Oregon for retail sales is the lack of a sales tax," said Jim Parsons, a broker handling retail property. "What the sales tax would do for this state is improve the economic outlook in every state but ours."

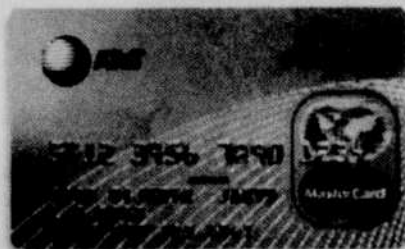
Others said Oregon's lack of a sales tax also can be a selling point to attract people from beyond adjacent states.

It is "one of the competitive factors" in trying to draw meetings to Portland, said Mike Smith, sales chief for the Oregon Convention Center.

But some sales tax backers said the presumed effects on retail sales are not very important next to the need to have a well-educated work force.

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## Forestry conference on Oct. 16

Those interested in promoting urban tree awareness can attend an urban forestry conference Oct. 16 from 8:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. at the Eugene Public Works Department.

Registrations are due Wednesday for the Tree Board Volunteer Networking and Visioning Conference, sponsored by the Oregon Department of Forestry. Members of community advisory and beautification committees, planning commissions, park boards and tree advisory committees are encouraged to attend.

"This conference will focus on ideas and techniques that can make volunteer committees more effective and promote greater tree awareness," said Kristin Ramstad, a community assistance forester with the state forestry department. "Volunteer efforts have become very important because many communities have recently been limited by significant budget cuts."

Ramstad said the goals of the conference are to discuss community forestry issues and to inspire further action by tree board volunteers. Tree activists and forestry experts are scheduled to speak at the conference.

A \$5 registration fee is required and people can register by contacting Ramstad at 945-7390.

### ET ALS

#### MEETINGS

**ASUO Student Senate** will meet tonight at 6 in EMU Century Room F. For more information, call 346-0630.

**Alpha Phi Omega** will meet tonight from 6 to 7 in Room 110 Willamette. For more information, call 744-5576.

**Northwest Human Resource Management Association** will host an information meeting today at 11:15 a.m. in Room 201 Gilbert.

**Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Alliance** will meet tonight at 7 in the EMU Board Room. For more information, call 346-3360.

**American Marketing Association** will host an information meeting tonight at 6 in Room 333 Gilbert. For more information, call 465-3276.

#### RELIGION

**Wesley Foundation Campus Ministry** will present "First Year Identity: God, College and You" for first-year students tonight from 6:30 to 7:30 at the Wesley Foundation, 1236 Kincaid St. For more information, call 346-4694.

**Campus Crusade for Christ** will present "Primetime" tonight at 8:05 in Room 231 Gilbert. For more information, call 485-4375.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

**Career Planning and Placement Service** will host an office orientation today from 1 to 2 p.m. and conduct an interview skills workshop from 2:30 to 4 p.m. in Room 221 Hendricks. Open sign-up for interviews begins today at 8 a.m. for the following organizations: U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps, KPMG Peat Marwick, Merck & Co., Price Waterhouse, Moss Adams, and Deloitte & Touche. Those interested in bidding for interviews must first attend an office orientation. For more information, call 346-3235.

Deadline for submitting Et Als to the Emerald front desk, Suite 300 EMU, is noon the day before publication. The news editor does not have a time machine. Et Als run the day of the event unless the event takes place before noon.