

Oregon's newcomers attracted by quality of life



PORTLAND (AP) — Oregon's newest residents on average are better educated than the state's longer-term residents and took a big cut in pay to relocate, a new survey suggests.

The state Employment Department survey of 1,412 people who turned in out-of-state driver's licenses in 1992 paints a picture of newcomers as driven more by the desire for a better way of life than by jobs and money.

More than a third of the transplants are professionals who create demand for housing and other services. At the same time, their high level of skills makes the state's white-collar job market more competitive.

"It is a two-edged sword," said David Allen, manager of the Workforce Analysis Section for the state Employment Department. "It is helping drive the Oregon economy and creating new jobs, but it also means that you have a lot more job seekers that are highly skilled."

An estimated 225,500 people have moved to Oregon during the past two years, about 113,500 of them in 1993.

The survey shows that more than a third of newcomers were college-educated, compared with one in five Oregonians age 25 or older who have lived in the state for at least three years.

The newcomers in the state study came from all over, but the biggest number — 43 percent — came from California. Nearly one in five came to Oregon to retire.

In 1980, only 14 percent were unemployed before moving. In 1993, a third of the newcomers were previously unemployed.

Nearly one in five in the state survey reported losing income — \$4,700 a year on average — in the move.

Bill and Betsy Lake moved to Oregon from Southern California. Bill Lake works as vice president of sales and marketing for a retail packaging company in Portland.

"In California, we lived basically in postage stamp

houses next to the freeway," he said. "I commuted up to Los Angeles every day. It ended up taking its toll. I was going to bed earlier than my kids."

Lake estimates that his family is \$10,000 a year poorer. Their medical benefits are lower in Oregon, and his company doesn't supply a car for him anymore.

Generally, those who said they came to Oregon to take a job suffered no loss of income; those who came to enjoy the quality of life tended to lose money but in most cases accept the loss.

"People say it's cheaper here," Lake said. "It's not cheaper. It's just a better quality of life."

Many Oregonians complain about growth. But for Allen of the state Employment Department, newcomers represent a plus for the economy.

"Oregon's economy is now to a large part driven by the demand that immigrants are bringing," he said. "And they are bringing asset value in not only skills but asset value and income, and they are spending it."

Violators of traffic laws will soon face increased penalties

SALEM (AP) — Judges and police officers expect to face angry motorists and longer court dockets next month, when the cost of breaking traffic laws increases dramatically.

"I can see my overtime budget going out of sight," said Pendleton Police Chief Ed Taber. "Trials are going to be astronomical."

As of Feb. 1:

- The bail for exceeding the 65 mph freeway speed limit by 10 mph or less, now about \$50, will jump to \$134. For driving 76 mph to 85 mph on the freeway, tickets will be \$329.

- The bail for running a stop sign or red light increases from \$48 in most places to \$233.

- The bail for driving with an open container of alcohol in a vehicle, now about \$50, will soar to \$416.

The new statewide bails are the work of the 1993 Legislature, and they are mandatory for all courts. Historically, local courts have had some leeway.

State court officials suggested bails be

raised to account for inflation. Some have not been increased since 1975.

State Court Administrator Bill Linden said lawmakers wound up raising bails by enough to cover about 70 percent of inflation in most cases.

There are obvious exceptions, such as the big increase for open alcohol container violations. Linden said lawmakers did that because drunken driving is a major problem.

The higher bails are estimated to yield about \$9.6 million a year in added revenue. The state would get \$7.2 million, with the rest going to cities and counties.

Linden said his main motive was not to help state coffers, however.

"You can argue that these things ought to be adjusted periodically like many other things," he said. "I didn't see this as a revenue producer."

Judges and police say the new system will be a rude shock to violators and will result in more court hearings.

Technically, bail is not a fine, although it amounts to that for motorists who dis-

pose of tickets by sending in the bail amount.

Drivers can also give written explanations or appear in court in hopes of getting lower fines than the bail amounts, or they can request trials.

"The problem will be people who will not be able to afford the bail," said Salem Municipal Judge Frank Gruber.

"Inflation doesn't do anything for somebody who doesn't have any income," said Gruber, who expects hearings for traffic tickets to increase. "A lot of people come into court because they don't have any money."

"Now some people can write a check for \$48 and not miss work to come to court," he said. "But no way can they write one for \$233."

Gruber foresees having to hire more temporary judges. He is the city's only full-time municipal judge.

Taber said he expects that higher bails will result in fewer tickets.

"Some of my officers found it difficult to write citations for \$99 for stop-sign vio-

lations," Taber said. "It's going to be hard to write someone a ticket for running a stop sign, (which) could cost them a month's rent."

Linden doubts if the bail changes will send many more people to court.

Most people just send in the bail "because usually there's little question about whether or not they're guilty," he said. "Hopefully what they'll do is stop violating the traffic laws."

"That's what we're hoping for," said Capt. Jim Stevenson, head of the State Police patrol division. But, he said, troopers already have run into negative reaction when tickets with higher bails have been written.

A few counties began using the new bails earlier than Feb. 1, as the law allowed.

"We have received concern from officers because motorists were not happy to see large bails," Stevenson said. "The officer becomes the vehicle for expressing their anger."

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