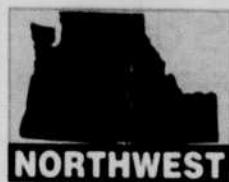


Backers of Ballot Measure 8 targeted by death threats



PORTLAND (AP) — The chief sponsors of Ballot Measure 8, an initiative that would make state employees pay 6 percent of their income to their pension, said they each have received death

threats by phone and mail.

Opponents, however, say the timing of the death-threat announcements may be politically motivated.

Rep. Bob Tiernan, R-Lake Oswego, and Bill Sizemore, executive director of Oregon Taxpayers United, are both named in a threatening letter received by Tiernan Oct. 18.

The letter writer, self-described as a sniper-trained Vietnam veteran who has been a Public Employees Retirement System member for 17 years, said Tiernan would become a target for killing should the measure pass and benefits change.

"I will say this," it reads, "you harm my benefits and my family (I have kids in college), then I will

harm you and/or your family.

"I am quite able to hit a standing or moving target beyond 800 yards with my weapons."

The letter, although postmarked Oct. 17 in Portland, was dated May 1993. The original copies of the letter and envelope were given to the FBI, which sent them to Washington D.C. for fingerprints, Tiernan said. Bart Gori, FBI spokesman in Portland, had no comment.

Sizemore, who called a news conference to reveal the letter, also played a recorded phone call to the Oregon Taxpayers United office from "three or four months" ago for a group of reporters.

The message said Sizemore "better back off," or "you're going to be floating in the river."

News of the death threats met with skepticism from the No On 8 campaign. Jason Reynolds, campaign spokesman, questioned the timing of making the threats public, 12 days before the election and one day after *The Oregonian* newspaper denounced the measure.

"I hope the letter's a fake," Reynolds said.

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Fire season cost hits 7-year high

(AP) — The Oregon Department of Forestry spent more than \$21 million fighting fires on state-protected lands this year, making 1994 the costliest fire season in seven years.

Department officials declared the fire season over this week in all but four Oregon counties — Jackson, Josephine, Klamath and Lake.

While temperatures in the four southern Oregon counties have cooled, the region hasn't received enough rain to lift fire restrictions, authorities said Tuesday.

The 1,420 wildfires reported on state-protected lands in 1994 blackened 51,594 acres, more than twice the 10-year annual average. Last year, fires on state-protected lands burned

only 1,184 acres and cost \$2 million to fight.

The figures don't include fires on U.S. Forest Service land. The state Department of Forestry protects 15.8 million acres of state, private and U.S. Bureau of Land Management property.

In 1987, the worst fire season in recent history, 91,441 acres burned on state-protected lands. The cost exceeded \$29 million.

This year's \$21.1 million bill for fighting fires will be offset by \$3 million in funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. But state officials say the cost of suppression still exceeded what they had budgeted.

"We came into the fire sea-

son prepared and expecting the worst," Carl Seely, the department's fire program director. "In many ways it was a disastrous fire season both in terms of the cost of suppression and the damage to resources, but also the human toll."

One firefighter was killed in August at the Hull Mountain Fire, an arson blaze in Jackson County.

The fire was also the state's most expensive this year, costing \$8 million to suppress. It blackened 8,000 acres, destroyed 10 homes and threatened hundreds of others.

Of the 1994 wildfires, 866 were caused by humans, either arson or accident, and 554 were caused by lightning.

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MEDIATION

Continued from 7A

ences.

"I think it would really help if there was a situation where there would be a misunderstanding and a chance at reconciliation," she said.

Roommate problems in University housing are usually solved when people come together to work out their differences with either the resident assistant or resident director.

"Most of the problems that come up are due to a lack of communication," said Aleena Kliever, a resident assistant for University housing.

The first solution, Kliever said, was for the roommates to discuss the problems themselves

and agree upon certain things that need to be changed. There have been several conflicts in the residence halls that have been resolved in such a manner, Kliever said.

Gibson said that students fund 60 percent of the Mediation Program and should use the service in times of crisis. In addition to workshops, the program offers student and staff dispute mediation throughout the year.

"Even though it's hard to measure, I feel the success rate is fairly high," Gibson said, adding that students should be aware that the program is their resource for discovering ways to solve interpersonal conflicts.

The Mediation Program is located in Room 318 EMU. For more information, call 346-4240.

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