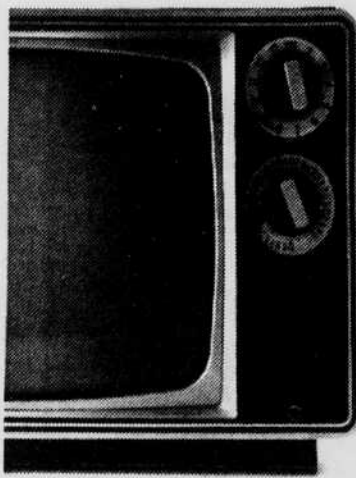


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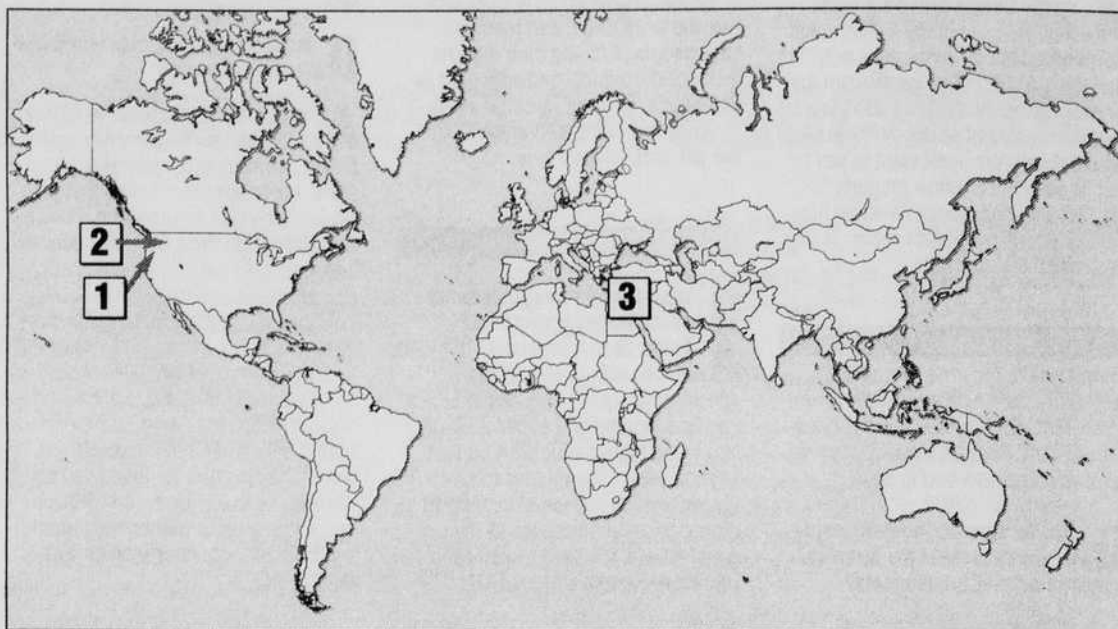
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NEWS DIGEST

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Oregonians do not see returns on federal tax

1 SALEM — Oregonians pay more federal taxes than the government spends on the state, according to a study released this week by Harvard University.

Oregonians paid \$342 a person more in taxes than the federal government spent on them in 1995 — the most recent data available.

The government spent \$4,215 per Oregon resident — \$680 a person less than the national average. At the same time, the federal government collected per capita taxes of \$4,557 from the state.

Oregon ranked 38th out of 50 states in the amount of federal spending it received, said the report, which details how the national government decides to divide its \$1.2 trillion budget.

Oregon's low ranking is due to its lack of military bases and weapons labs, which bring in millions of federal dollars.

Also, the state's 1995 poverty rate of 13.8 percent was lower than the national average of 15.8 percent, resulting in less federal money for programs to help the poor.

The one consolation for Oregon: state taxpayers paid \$338 less per capita than the national average, partly because the state's average income is lower. Oregon's per capita income was \$22,301 in 1995, compared to \$22,788 nationally.

Three men charged with bank robbery

2 SPOKANE, Wash. — Three men were charged Wednesday in a series of bank robberies in which gunmen linked to a white supremacist group used pipe bomb explosions as diversions.

"Yahweh is my defense," defendant Jay Merrell told U.S. Magistrate Judge Cynthia Imbrogno. "I'll ask for nothing in bail."

Merrell, whose age was not known; Charles Barbee, 44; and Robert Berry, 42; all from around Sandpoint in northern Idaho, were each charged with nine counts involving bank robbery, auto theft and use of bombs.

If convicted, they could face life in prison without parole.

Authorities charged the men in connection with two robberies of the same Spokane Valley bank and with the detonation of three bombs in connection with the holdups.

Both bank robberies were carried out by at least four masked gunmen in camouflage, carrying assault rifles and shotguns. In the first holdup, the fleeing robbers detonated a pipe bomb inside the bank.

The bombers left letters with markings of the Phineas Priesthood, a shadowy white supremacist organization opposed to interracial marriage, abortion and homosexuality.

Imbrogno set a hearing for next Tuesday to determine bail.

Mediterranean quake kills one in Egypt

3 NICOSIA, Cyprus — A strong Mediterranean earthquake rattled much of the Middle East on Wednesday, killing an Egyptian whose house collapsed on top of her and injuring 21 Cypriots.

Buildings swayed in Cyprus and panicked residents ran outside in Egypt, the two places that sustained the worst damage from the magnitude-6.8 quake. The temblor also was felt across Israel, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, western Turkey and the Greek islands of Rhodes and Crete.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the 3:10 p.m. earthquake occurred in the Mediterranean Sea about 20 miles southwest of the Cypriot port of Paphos and some 80 miles from Nicosia.

Police reported a 40-year-old villager was killed when her house collapsed in Faheem, north of Cairo.

Twenty-one people were hurt in Paphos in southwestern Cyprus, the port closest to the epicenter.

The region has a history of deadly tremors. On Nov. 22, an earthquake of magnitude-6.2 rocked the Gulf of Aqaba, damaging buildings in Jordan, Egypt and Israel and killing eight people.

Wednesday's quake was felt for more than two minutes. A mild aftershock followed about an hour later.

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