

# Making a break for it: planes, trains and alternatives

By Suzanne O'Kelley  
for the Emerald

For a city of roughly 120,000 people, Eugene has a lot of entertainment and diversions to offer.

But for term breaks, three-day weekends and even day trips, it can be a refreshing break to get out of the grasp of tie-dye, anarchy and Valley River Center. And thanks to a comprehensive mass transit system, no car is necessary.

Though Greyhound is generally

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believed to be the most economical way to get out of town, Amtrak is a close second. To compare, a round-trip ticket to Portland on Greyhound costs from \$13.50 to \$20.50, and takes two and a half to four hours. Eight buses travel from Eugene to Portland daily.

To travel to and from Portland on Amtrak, however, costs between \$14 and \$33, making the trip in just over two hours. Four trains leave Eugene daily, and Amtrak buses leave six times a day.

“I don't have a car, so I take Greyhound and Amtrak equally,” University sophomore Amelia Simmons said. “Amtrak is more cushy, but Greyhound is usually cheaper and easier to get to.”

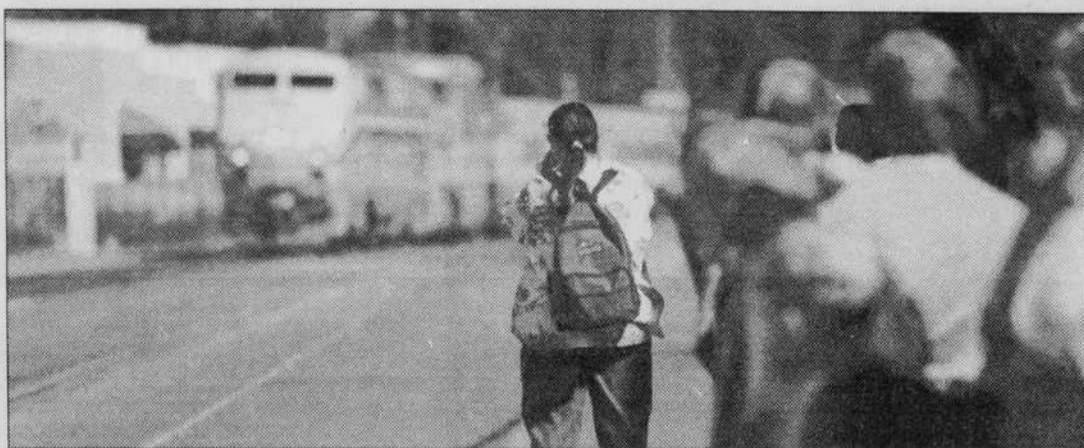
Both Amtrak and Greyhound tickets can be purchased even more cheaply if consumers purchase ahead or look for discounts.

Amtrak's “Rail Sales” program continually offers cheaper fares to varying destinations. For example, from Oct. 2 to Oct. 31, one-way tickets to Seattle are only \$22.50, down from the usual price of \$34.

Greyhound offers specialized discounts from general tickets instead. With the Student Advantage Card, Greyhound will take 15 percent off the bus fare.

If a more distant destination is desired, air travel is always an option.

Unlike most nearby cities, Eugene has an airport serving four



Azle Malinao-Alvarez Emerald

Travellers wait to board an incoming Amtrak train at the station in downtown Eugene. Many people take advantage of the alternatives to driving when leaving town for a weekend or extended break.

commercial airlines and about 40 flights daily.

United, United Express, Horizon and America West fly to Denver, Portland, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Phoenix.

Though a trip to a much bigger city than Eugene or Portland, such as Seattle, is cheaper by train, the

13-hour bus trip to San Francisco might make a plane ticket worth the extra cost. At between \$200 and \$300 for a round-trip flight, San Francisco is not as unattainable as it seems.

From Portland, airfare to San Francisco goes as low as \$138, but the hassle might outweigh the

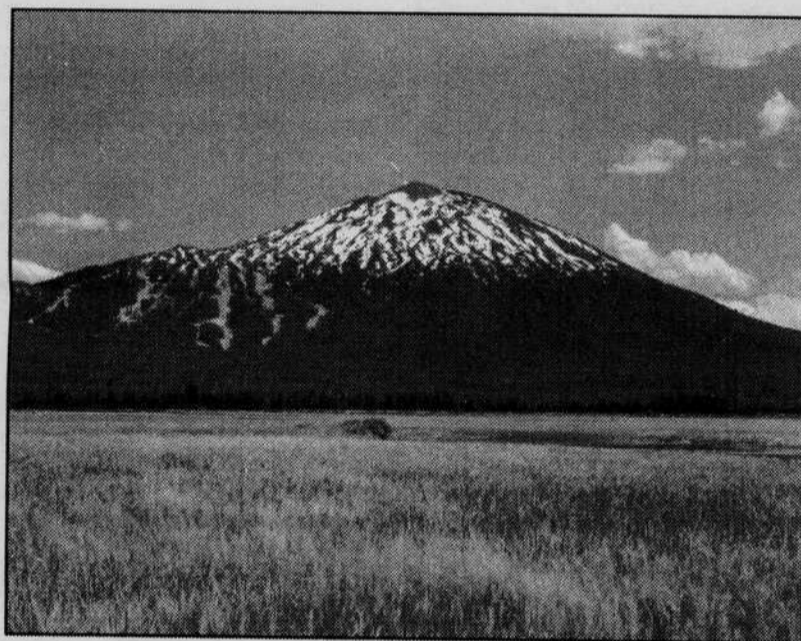
money saved.

Airport administrators acknowledged that the advantage of the Portland airport is that more flights mean more competition and lower fares. But, of course, getting to Portland takes time and money.

And those are two things college students never have enough of.

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## Kitzhaber challenges doctors to show vigor

EUGENE (AP) — The Oregon Health Plan needs doctors to reinvigorate it with their energy and leadership — and if they don't, managed care in the state will die, according to Gov. John Kitzhaber.

“It's time for doctors to stop reacting and start leading,” Kitzhaber told 150 Lane County doctors at a meeting Sept. 12 of the Lane County Medical Society in Eugene.

“Where we're heading today is not where we want to go. It's not good for doctors, it's not good for patients, and it's not good for the state of Oregon,” he said.

Kitzhaber emphasized similar themes Sept. 13 at a daylong Oregon Health Plan summit also in Eugene.

The governor convened the summit early this year to work out a proposal for the 2001 Legislature that would move Oregon toward universal health coverage.

An emergency room doctor, Kitzhaber has supported the Oregon Health Plan for more than a decade. The statewide plan insures low-income people not covered through traditional government programs.

More than 400 people attended Wednesday's summit, including 16 state legislators, and Kitzhaber challenged them to build on the successes and fix the flaws of the Oregon Health Plan.

One of the challenges in health care is that employers are facing the steepest premium increases they've seen since the early '90s. Average costs rose 8.3 percent in 1999, up from 4.8 percent the previous year, according to a recent national survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation.

The governor made no specific proposals for controlling costs or solving the health care problems of the uninsured.

Instead, he called on lawmakers and groups including the health care industry and consumer advocates to commit to a series of goals, including seeking ways to provide access to health care for all residents — not just the very poor.